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JOHN RUSKIN

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ALICE C. MEYNELL

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JOHN RUSKIN

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

JOHN RUSKIN'S life was not only centred, but limited, by the places where he was born and taught, and by the things he loved. The London suburb and the English lake-side for his homes, Oxford for his place first of study and then of teaching, usually one beaten road by France, Switzerland, and Italy for his annual journeys—these closed the scene of his dwellings and travellings. There was a water-colour drawing by his father that interested him when he was a little boy in muslin and a sash (as Northcote painted him, with his own chosen " blue hills " for a background), and this drawing hung over his bed when he died; the evenings of his last days were passed in the chair wherein he preached in play a sermon before he could well pronounce it. The nursery lessons and the household ways of the home on Herne Hill partly remained with him, reverend and unquestionable, to his last day. And yet the student of the work done in this quiet life of repetitions is somewhat shaken from the steadfastness of study by two things —multitude and movement. The multitude is in the thoughts of this great and original mind, and the movement is the world's. Ruskin's enormous work has never had steady auditors or spectators: it may be likened to a sidereal sky beheld from an earth upon the wing. Many, innumerable, are the points that seem to shift and journey, to the shifting eye. Partly it was he himself who altered his readers; and partly they changed with the long change of a nation; and partly they altered with successive and recurrent moods. John Ruskin wrote first for his contemporaries, young men; fifty years later he wrote for the same readers fifty years older, as well as for their sons. And hardly has a mob of Shakespeare's shown more sudden, unanimous, or clamorous versions and reversions of opinion than those that have acclaimed and rejected, derided and divided, his work, once to ban and bless, and a second time to bless and ban.

Political economy in 1860 had but one orthodoxy, which was that of "Manchester"; scientifically, it held competition in production and in distribution, with the removal (as far as was possible to coherent human society) of all intervention of explicit social legislation, to be favourable to the wealth of nations; and ethically it held that if only the world would leave opposing egoisms absolutely free, and would give self-interest the opportunity of perfection, a violent, hostile, mechanical equity and justice would come to pass. Only let men resolve never to relax or cede for the sake of forbearance or compassion, and the Manchester system would be found to work for good. In 1860 it was much in favour of this doctrine that itself and all its workings were alike unbeautiful to mind and eye. Men might regret the vanishing beauty of the world, but they were convinced that it was the ugly thing that was "useful," and that, as it did not attract, it would not deceive. Before the closing of the century all men changed their mind. But when Ruskin warned them that scientifically their "orthodox" economy made for an intolerable poverty, that ethically it aimed at making men less human, and that practically it could never, while man was no less than man, have the entire and universal freedom of action upon which its hope of ultimate justice depended; when he recommended a more organic and less mechanical equity—he was hooted to silence.

Ruskin first commended the rejoining together of art and handicraft, put asunder in the decline of the "Renaissance"; and for this too he was generally derided, because men were sure that the ugly thing was the useful and the comfortable. John Ruskin would show them that it was neither of these, but they would have it that he was showing them merely that it was ugly. That is, he was accused of teaching sentimentality in public economy and in art, whereas his teaching dealt with human character and ultimate utility.

But the moving world has rejected his teaching more violently after fifty years, in two things more momentous than the rest: it has gone further in that enquiry as to the origin of the ideas of moral good and evil against which Ruskin warned it in the words of Carlyle; and it has multiplied its luxuries. By these two actions it has effectually rejected the teaching of Ruskin.

"The moving world":—assuredly this great thinker gave years of thought to the discovery of moral causes for the enormous losses of mankind, and did not sufficiently confess the obscure motive power of change. Byzantine architecture was overcome by Gothic, not only because Gothic was strongly north-western, but because it was new; Gothic was supplanted by the Renaissance, not only because Gothic was enfeebled, but because the Renaissance was new. He saw the beauty of the hour with eyes and heart so full of felicity that he cried, "Stay, thou art so fair!" It never stayed, passing by the law—but how shall we dare to call that a law whereof we know not the cause, the end, or the sanctions? Let us rather, ignorant yet vigilant, call it the custom—of the universe.

John Ruskin himself has told us his life in exquisite detail. He underwent in childhood a strict discipline, common in those times, had no toys, was "whipped," was compelled to a self-denial that he perceived his elders did not practise upon themselves. It was the asceticism of the day, reserved for the innocent. Charles Dickens did more than any man to make the elderly ashamed of it. Ruskin's mother kept the training of the child in her own hands, and subjected him and herself to a hardly credible humiliation by the reading aloud, in alternate verses, of the whole Bible, Levitical Law and all, beginning again at Genesis when the Apocalypse was finished. She was her husband's senior, and, like him, of the Evangelical sect. She dedicated this her only child "to the Lord" before his birth, and when his genius appeared hoped he would be a bishop. He obeyed her, tended and served her, till at ninety years old she died.

John Ruskin's father was a Scottish wine-merchant, well educated and liberally interested in the arts. He married his first cousin, daughter of an inn-keeper at Croydon, prospered greatly in trade by his partnership with Telford and Domecq, and rose in the world. His sister was married to a tanner at Perth; his wife's sister to a baker at Croydon. His son, born at 54 Hunter Street, Brunswick Square, on February 8, 1819, took his first little journeys on his visits to these aunts. The child remembered the street home, but it was in his Herne Hill home and in the Herne Hill garden that he became possessed of the antiquities of childhood.

The boy learnt, in his companionship with his father and mother, to love Scott, Rogers, and Byron, and he remained nobly docile to the admirations of his dear elders. Otherwise, one should have needed to quote some phrase of his own to define the feebleness of the *Italy*, the cold corruption of heart of *Don Juan*, the inventory of nature's beauties versified by Scott. Ruskin was impulsive; sometimes he loved a thing first seen more than he was to love it later; but generally he loved the customs of his sweet childhood. He read with a tutor—a nonconformist minister, Dr. Andrews, the father of the lady who became Coventry Patmore's first wife; matriculated at Christ Church, Oxford, in 1836, where he won the Newdigate prize (*Salsette and*

Elephanta the subject) in 1839, became Honorary Student of Christ Church and Honorary Fellow of Corpus Christi, and Slade Professor (Chair of Fine Arts founded by Felix Slade) in 1870, to be three times re-elected. His boyish education had been furthered by annual journeys with his father and mother, first in Britain, on wine-selling business, and then abroad, always in a travelling carriage. The three used to set out in May of all these years; and the last journey was in 1859, in Germany. Early in his teens the boy fell in love with the daughter of his father's partner, Mr. Domecq, and suffered a decline of health in his disappointment. But the friendship with Turner (if that could be called a friendship which seemed to have such strange reserves) was the central fact of his life as a young man.

The little family took up its abode in a larger and more worldly house, 163 Denmark Hill, in 1843. In 1848 Ruskin married, most unfortunately; his wife left him a few years later, the marriage was legally annulled, and he lived again, as though he were a boy, with his parents. More than twenty years later a lady who had been his girlish disciple and whom he had long loved, but who seemed unable to decide for or against a marriage with him, died estranged.

This solitary life was consoled during all its middle and later terms by the affection of his cousin, Mrs. Arthur Severn, who had lived with his mother in her widowhood, and bore him company, with her husband and children, until his death in his home at Brantwood, Coniston, on the 20th of January, 1900.

John Ruskin had been a writer from his babyhood. The first expectation was of the poetic genius, but his poems were never more than mediocre. His prose asserted itself quickly, for he was only twenty-four when the first volume of *Modern Painters* was published. His renunciation of the sectarian religion of his parents will be told further on. He was always essentially religious, but he passed, during the later maturity of his mind, through some years of doubt as to authoritative doctrine, returning to definite beliefs in course of time. His Oxford and other series of lectures, and the undertaking of the St. George's Company, will be touched upon in this volume in their place amongst his works. Of those works I have attempted the analysis, slight and brief, but essential, with quotations from beautiful and indispensable pages. I intend the following essay to be principally a handbook of Ruskin.

In his central or later-central years John Ruskin was a thin and rather tall man, very English (Scottish in fact, but I mean to indicate the physique that looks conspicuous on the Continent), active and light, with sloping shoulders; he had a small face with large features, the eyebrows, nose, and under-lip prominent; his eyes were blue, and the blue tie—by the peculiar property of a strong blue to increase a neighbouring lesser blue, instead of quenching it—made them look the bluest of all blue eyes. He had the *r* in the throat, the *r* of the Parisians, which gives a certain weakness to English speech; and in lecturing he had a rather clerical inflexion. He was a disciple (as in his relation to Carlyle and later to Professor Norton), a master, a pastor, a chivalrous servant to the young and weak, but too anxious, too lofty, to be in the equal sense a friend.

He was broken by sorrow long before he died. His purposes had been, for the time, defeated. His final renunciation of the Slade Professorship (he had resigned it before for one interval in a time of deep grief) was due to the vote passed to establish a physiological laboratory (to establish, that is, vivisection) at the museum at Oxford; he took this for a sign of the contradiction of the world. He has left his museum at Sheffield, a linen industry at Keswick, and handloom weaving at Langdale, fairly successful, the Turner drawings arranged (at indescribable labour) in the National Gallery, and his public gifts. But much of his work that was not the written word passed, like the drawing-lessons he had given to working-men at their classes in Great Ormond Street and in the fields, in 1857. But it was not failure or rejection, or even partial and futile acceptance, that finally and interiorly bowed him. "Your poor John Ruskin" (his signature in writing to one who loved and understood him) was the John Ruskin who never pardoned himself for stopping short of the whole renunciation of a Saint Francis. Lonely and unhappy does the student perceive him to have been who was one of the greatest of great men of all ages; but the student who is most cut to the heart by that perception is compelled to wish him to have been not less but more a man sacrificed.

CHAPTER II

"MODERN PAINTERS"

THE FIRST VOLUME (1843)

"THE picture which is looked to for an interpretation of nature is invaluable, but the picture which is taken as a substitute for nature had better be burned." John Ruskin began to write *Modern Painters* in order to teach men how they should see Turner to be like nature, whereas the "critics" of that day called him unnatural. The "critics" of our days would leave that word to their wives and daughters. But it was a word for the best reviews in the middle of the century. In order to prove this delicate point as to the interpretation of nature and its value, John Ruskin, then very young, wrote the first half of the first volume, and the discussion of Turner follows, with the universal digressions that make of this volume and its fellows a work at once of unity of motive, and of multitudinous variety. The first volume is written with extreme explicatory labour. Having thought out a certain difficult thesis, the writer bends every power to the task of communication. What he has to impose is no state or grace or affection, what he has to communicate is no conjecture, nor does he make his way by that attractive divination of authorship which is companionable, now at fault, now halting, now leading with confidence a new and untried way. No more than a treatise of science is this work designed to bid the reader to that table of entertainment, the art of English prose. It is only at intervals, and at the end of a clause of explanation, that this author, who has excited so many enthusiasms, some futile and some worthy, by an over-abundant eloquence—a pure style but somewhat prodigal—adorns his argument with a cadence, a group of beautiful warm words, as it were alight and in time, "musical" and "pictorial," the vital, just, and brilliant phrase that afterwards took the nation.

The argument is difficult—difficult in the prolonged study made by him who wrought it from the beginning to the end, most difficult to present sufficiently in a brief commentary such as this. What Ruskin had to prove was that a few greatly admired masters —Salvator Rosa, Gaspar Poussin, and Claude, especially,—were inferior as painters of landscape to a certain number of English artists at work about the middle of the nineteenth century; but their inferiority also to the earlier masters whose landscape was but an accessory, and to the Venetians of the great school of colour, whose landscape has been mistaken for arbitrary decoration, makes so large an incident of the work that the title becomes questionable. *Modern Painters* proved to be a great apology for the art of the past, and of all periods of the past, for Gainsborough profits splendidly: the antithesis disappears. Salvator Rosa, Gaspar Poussin, and Claude have, besides, ceased (thanks to Ruskin's own teaching) to have the importance that the critics of sixty years ago assigned to them; their names do not stand, in our thoughts to-day, opposed conspicuously to those of later men now long dead, and brought, in our view, near to those predecessors by the perspective of time. The slight anomaly of the name *Modern Painters* is increased for us now; but that name represents much that is of significance. The admiration of Salvator Rosa and the contempt of Turner, the fact that Claude was a seventeenth century painter and Turner was new, are things important in the history of the authorship of *Modern Painters.* Let it be noted here that a writer to whom was committed by one of the principal reviews the criticism of art in 1842 preferred a Mr. Lee to Gainsborough—"he is superior to him always in subject, composition, and variety"—not with an irresponsible preference, but with the preference of a connoisseur, "subject, composition, and variety," not being things whereof the first comer is able so to print opinions. "Shade of Gainsborough!" says Ruskin—"deep-thoughted, solemn Gainsborough, forgive us for rewriting this sentence." Lee was a painter more insular than it is permitted to a painter to be, piecemeal and literal, and very cold in colour; "well-intentioned, simple, free from affectation," and doing his work "with constant reference to nature," says the preface to the second edition of *Modern Painters*, but lacking "those technical qualities which are more especially the object of an artist's admiration." This phrase is quoted here because it is one of many that should keep the reader straight in the following of the doctrine of this book. A reader who had spared himself the pains of close following might think Ruskin to have taught that "well-intentioned" work bearing a "constant reference to nature" had nearly all the qualities, whereas in this passage he declares it to have, virtually, none.

The evil of the ancient landscape art (Ruskin persistently calls it ancient, but let the reader bear in mind that he is in the act of comparing it with more ancient as well as with modern) "lies, I believe," says this preface to the second edition,

> "In the painter's taking upon him to modify God's works at his pleasure, casting the shadow of himself on all he sees. We shall not pass through a single gallery of old art without hearing this topic of praise confidently advanced. The sense of artificialness, . . . the clumsiness of combination by which the meddling of man is made evident, and the feebleness of his hand branded on the inorganisation of his monstrous creature, are advanced as a proof of inventive power."

We ought to note the word "inorganisation." For we shall be willing to take it from Ruskin that the painter convicted of *that* is the one condemned; he who destroys in order to reconstruct produces inorganised work, and work therefore without vitality. But a certain foreseen and judicial re-arrangement of natural facts—a new but indestructive relation—proves that very organic quality, and is defended, not once or twice, but a hundred times in the teaching of *Modern Painters*. And only by exquisitely close reading can we distinguish and reconcile, so as to take this defence and also what follows:

> "In his observations on the foreground of the San Pietro Martire, Sir Joshua advances, as matter of praise, that the plants are discriminated 'just as much as was necessary for variety, and no more.' Had this foreground been occupied by a group of animals, we should have been surprised to be told that the lion, the serpent, and the dove . . . were distinguished from each other just as much as was necessary for variety, and no more. . . . If the distinctive forms of animal life are meant for our reverent observance, is it likely that those of vegetable life are made merely to be swept away?"

(In this case Sir Joshua, according to *Modern Painters*, was wrong even as to facts, and Titian, like Raphael, was accurate in his foreground flowers.) Sir Joshua separates, says Ruskin, "as chief enemies, the details and the whole, which an artist cannot be great unless he reconciles." "Details perfect in unity, and contributing to a final purpose, are the sign of the production of a consummate master." This is surely a passage of singular difficulty. Truth to nature—the statement of no falsehood and the doing of no destructive violence—is an intelligible condition of the art whereof this is the apostolate; but detail? Is detail, or explicit recognition of minor facts, really the "sign of the production of a consummate master"? "Details contributing to a final purpose" seems to be a phrase permitting the ignoring of details that do not contribute. And what does the Impressionist ask more than this? A powerful artist, says Ruskin in a previous sentence, "necessarily looks upon complete *parts* as the very sign of error, weakness, and ignorance." Once for all, this should answer the common and careless reading of *Modern Painters* and the rest.

Leaving the question of detail, then, aside, or leaving it, if once for all is hardly possible, for a time, we shall do justice to Ruskin's teaching by choosing from his most dogmatic pages the following passages that bear upon the larger question of truth:

> "When there are things in the foreground of Salvator, of which I cannot pronounce whether they be granite, or slate, or tufa, I affirm that there is in them neither harmonious union nor simple effect, but simple monstrosity. . . . The elements of brutes can only mix in corruption, the elements of inorganic nature only in annihilation. We may, if we choose, put together centaur monsters: but they must still be half man, half horse; they cannot be both man and horse, nor either man or horse."

And this:

> "That only should be considered a picture in which the spirit, not the materials, observe, but the animating emotion, of many . . . studies is concentrated and exhibited by the aid of long-studied, painfully chosen forms; idealised in the right sense of the word, not by audacious liberty of that faculty of degrading God's works which man calls his 'imagination,' but by perfect assertion of entire knowledge . . . wrought out with that noblest industry which concentrates profusion into point, and transforms ac-

> cumulation into structure. . . . There is . . . more ideality in a great artist's selection and treatment of roadside weeds and brook-worn pebbles than in all the struggling caricature of the meaner mind, which heaps its foreground with colossal columns, and heaves impossible mountains into the encumbered sky."

Those columns and those mountains get no respect from any one at present, but it must not be forgotten that the book before us was in part written to overthrow them.

All this is from the later-written preface. We come next to *Modern Painters*, Part I. Section 1, the earliest important page of one of the greatest authors of our incomparable literature. It is a laborious page, in great part filled by one sentence explaining that public opinion can hardly be right upon matters of art until, with the lapse of time, it shall have accepted guidance. The same chapter declares war explicitly upon the "old masters" in landscape, and the reader has to add to the names of Salvator Rosa, Gaspar Poussin, and Claude, those of Cuyp, Berghem, Both, Ruysdael, Hobbema, Teniers (in landscape), Paul Potter, Canaletto, "and the various Van somethings and Back somethings, more especially and malignantly those who have libelled the sea." In the chapter, soon following, "On Ideals of Power," is to be especially noted the just thought:

> "It is falsely said of great men that they waste their lofty powers on unworthy objects. The object . . . cannot be unworthy of the power which it brings into exertion, because nothing can be accom-

> plished by a greater power which can be accomplished by a less, any more than bodily strength can be exerted where there is nothing to resist it. . . . Be it remembered, then, Power is never wasted."

(Ruskin, at this time and ever after, used "which" where "that" would be both more correct and less inelegant. He probably had the habit from him who did more than any other to disorganise the English language—that is, Gibbon.)

The chapter on "Imitation" is in part addressed to the correction of a half-educated pleasure, since then generally relinquished even by the half-educated, and even in the case of popular pictures. Amid much that is less valuable, the reader finds this obvious but excellent distinction:

> "A marble figure does not look like what it is not: it looks like marble, and like the form of a man. It does not look like a man, which it is not, but like the form of a man, which it is. . . . The chalk outline of the bough of a tree on paper is not an imitation; it looks like chalk and paper—not like wood, and that which it suggests to the mind is not properly said to be like the form of a bough, it *is* the form of a bough."

The contrast is, of course, with work in colour, and it is finely made, with the conclusion, for all the arts alike, "Ideas of truth are the foundation, and ideas of imitation the destruction, of art." On the chapter "Of Ideas of Relation" the criticism of thirty years ago, led by France on the initiative of Théophile Gautier, and generally proclaimed by a generation now nearly dispossessed, joined issue with Ruskin. He teaches that art has its highest exercise in "the invention of such incidents and thoughts as can be expressed in words as well as on canvas, and are totally independent of any means of art but such as may serve for the bare suggestion of them." Let me give the instance cited in the text:

> "The principal object in the foreground of Turner's 'Building of Carthage' is a group of children sailing toy boats. The exquisite choice of this incident, as expressive of the ruling passion which was to be the source of future greatness, in preference to the tumult of busy stonemasons or arming soldiers, is quite as appreciable when it is told as when it is seen,—it has nothing to do with the technical difficulties of painting: a scratch of the pen would have conveyed the idea. . . . Claude, in subjects of the same kind, commonly introduces people carrying red trunks with iron locks about; . . . . the intellect can have no occupation here; we must look to the imitation or to nothing. Consequently, Turner rises above Claude in the very instant of the conception of his picture."

Are we really required to connect this foreground incident essentially with the "conception" of Turner's picture? And how about Turner's pictures wherein no such unlandscape-like accessory occurs?

Ruskin was, it is evident in a score of places, no musician. How should a musician consent to the judgment that his art should do its highest and most musicianly work in uttering thoughts that another art might have served? Is not an absolute melody, or an absolute musical phrase, or a harmony—*Batti*, *batti*, the opening notes of Parsifal, *This is My Body* from Bach's St. Matthew, or the chords of Purcell's *Winter* —aloof—not far, but different—from the several worlds of the other arts? The man who has not music in his soul may perhaps be a man debarred from thought that is not, in some sense, literature; the other arts, albeit distinct enough, may not have the power that music has to prove the distinction in the ear that is able to hear. Therefore he who has not the ear lacks the strongest of the proofs that the arts are not interchangeable. The able eye will not do so much. To advance such a conjecture here may be something like presumption, but it is intended to explain one of the few faults or weak places in the great body of doctrine of *Modern Painters*. The least thoughtful reader has by rote the accusation against Ruskin that his teaching on art abounds in errors and "inconsistencies." The present writer finds no such abundance of faults in the great argument. There, however, is one.

From the chapter on "Ideas of Power" may be cited the admirable explanation of the conviction of power produced in all minds, ignorant and educated, by the "sketch," or by the beginning. "The first five chalk touches bring a head into existence out of nothing. No five touches in the whole course of the work will ever do so much as these." Toward completion the decrease of respective effect continues. We ought not, Ruskin tells us, to prefer this sensation of power to the intellectual estimate of power that comes as the work is developed. Those who take, without the necessary care for precise meanings what he has said elsewhere against Michelangiolo should check their own exaggeration by the sentence in which he judges that master to be the only father of art from whose work we get both the sensation and the intellectual estimate of power, and equally. The chapter "Of Ideas of Truth" entangles us once again in the intricacies of this argument. "No falsehood," it assures us, was ever beautiful. But granting that the beautiful centaur is not in this subtle sense a falsehood, does the same dispensation hold good in the case of a brown shadow—a fictitious brown shadow, even—cast upon a twilight road in order that a bright cloud may be seen to shine? The painter has not nature's materials wherewith to make his picture match hers; and that her foreground is light whilst yet her cloud shines does not make the same relation possible to man, who does not hold the pencils of light. Truth as it is in a paint-box can be but relative. This is the obvious protest of every reader. Nay, does not Ruskin himself justify Rubens who—out of gaiety and vitality of heart and not because of awful devotion to one beautiful and hardly accessible thing, like the luminosity of a cloud—puts the sun in one part of the sky and draws the sunbeams from another, and, again, casts shadows at right angles to the light? "Bold and frank licences" he names these—no worse; albeit with this fine warning: "The young artist must keep in mind that the painter's greatness consists not in his taking, but in his atoning for, them." It remains for him who would enter into the matter to follow the argument of *Modern Painters* as its author presents it and as no summary comment is able to represent it. Let it only be added here that the reason Ruskin gives for the abhorrence of "falsehood"—that nature is immeasurably superior to all that the human mind can conceive—seems to be precisely a reason why man might be content with one or two truths at a time and reverently glad of the means (fictitious shadow amongst them) of securing the one or two;. not in disorganisation, but in the unity of, as it were, a dazzled pictorial vision, confessing its limitations by fewness, and its love of natural facts by closing with the few. If Turner was so supreme an artist as to have stolen that fire from heaven which is the light, why still there are painters who have not it and yet have not deserved to die. But to say so of Turner would be a mere trick of speech. Not even he had more than a paint-box; but doubtless he was the most divine landscape painter that ever lived. And his great panegyrist magnifies him for the sake of that natural truth whereof he writes: "To him who does not search it out it is darkness, as it is to him who does, infinity."

The chapter on "The Relative Importance of Truths" intends to prove, "if it be not self-evident," that "generality gives importance to the subject, and limitation or particularity to the predicate," and proves it by admirable reasoning. From "Truths of Colour" might be cited something difficult to reconcile with Ruskin's judgment elsewhere in favour of the

Tuscan colourists (local-colourists, that is) and against the chiaroscurists, even Rembrandt. But here and in other places it is barely just to bear in mind the age of the writer of the first volume of *Modern Painters*, and the half century following during which he thought out incessantly the same themes. Wonderful was this mind of four and twenty; it would have been monstrous had it undergone none of the change that comes of mental experience, and of a pushing-on in the undertaken way.

And this brings us to the end of the first seven chapters of this first volume—chapters of principles, which are applied with a large sweep of allusion to the works of all schools. When, in the course of this most interesting section, we find fidelity of detail again commended, let us remember that neglect of the spirit and truth as well as of the letter of natural things was characteristic of the English painters before this book itself did so much to alter the manner of our school. We are used now to the English landscape that is the "corrupt following" of this apostle, Ruskin, and is full of literal detail; but it did not exist when *Modern Painters* was written. It was necessary to tell people accustomed to a brown tree and a tapering stem that Raphael, Titian, Ghirlandajo, and Perugino painted little mallows, strawberries, and all wayside things with devotion and precision, that Masaccio drew a true mountain, that the Umbrians painted true skies, that Giotto traced the form of a rock, and the Venetians of a tree, in their right anatomy. It was insular then to be coarse and general; and the teaching of detail was liberal education. The chapter on "Application" is remarkable for its generosity. Austere had been the principles in the setting forth, but the applications give absolution, I know not quite how consciously, assuredly not arbitrarily, but sometimes to the reader's wonder, seeing what has gone before. A noble convention is excused, and the passion of one man is acknowledged to be sudden and of another to be slow. It is rarely indeed that the application of the strenuous principles is made by Ruskin to condemn any man altogether, if that man have genius; the final reference is to *that;* pardon is for the great, and the court of judgment that grants it cannot publish its rules. The Dutch painters are unhouseled, and so is Domenichino. The work of that Bolognese is named by Ruskin not failure, but "perpetration and commission." The painter of the second greatest picture in the world, as the connoisseur, during a century or two, held the "Communion of St. Jerome" to be, is here declared "palpably incapable of doing anything good, great, or right." He who said this, studying Domenichino for himself, a student twenty-three years old or less, against the world, held a "consistency" and knew it. And, of course, the landscape painters already named—Gaspar Poussin, Canaletto, and the rest—are unforgiven. It is through a series of criticisms on the Royal Academy of the "Forties" that we come at last to the detail of the work of Turner.

At the outset Ruskin traces the foundation of Turner's greatness in his painting of things intimate and long loved. The Yorkshire downs taught him, for instance, the masses of mountain drawing. With something that looks like rashness Ruskin says of any landscape painter that " if he attempt to impress on his landscapes any other spirit than that he has felt, and to make them the landscapes of other times, it is all over with him, at least in the degree in which such reflected moonshine takes the place of the genuine light of the present day." If in some other place such a judgment as this is to be reconciled with the praise of Turner's " Building of Carthage," it is not here. (That picture is, in effect, renounced later on, as, in colour, unworthy of the master.) Moreover, when a great exception is made to the general peril of taking inspirations from afar or from antiquity, in the fine phrase: " Nicola Pisano got nothing but good, the modern French nothing but evil, from the study of the antique; but Nicola Pisano had a God and a character " ; how is this to be taken as a warning by a student who is not a Frenchman and who has not abandoned the faith than he too has a God and a character? Yet it is spoken by Ruskin as a warning, nearly as a menace. The study of the dealing of Turner with France, Switzerland, and Italy, which follows, and of their dealings with his growing power, is an exquisite one, notwithstanding some certain paradoxes—exquisite in regard to that beautiful and diverse Europe, and in regard to the genius. Ruskin says, perhaps, too little rather than too much of the un-Italian spirit of the Italy of Turner's work: " I recollect no instance of Turner's drawing a cypress except in general terms." The man, I may add, who possessed not, among the many spirits of the woods, the special spirit of the cypress, assuredly could not spiritually paint the country of the hill-village, the belfry, the gold-white simple walls, the pure and remote sky pricked with delicate and upright forms on the hill-edge, the country of soft dust and of old colours, the country of poverty, which is Italy. An opulent and an elegant Italy of balustrades and gardens, and, if one may venture to say so, a country of the ideal past, seems to be Turner's. Of the poplars, of the rivers, of the large skies and the flat valleys of France, Turner became the son by singular sympathy. Ruskin describes the adoption in a brief and lovely passage on the beauties of that domestic France. He tells us that Turner's rendering of Switzerland was generally deficient, but this seems to be said rather on a theory, and we cannot forget the entire praise and wonder bestowed elsewhere on the drawings of Swiss and Savoyard mountains.

The " changes introduced by Turner in the received system of art " shall be given in the words of *Modern Painters*, the page being one of the most important in the work :

> " It was impossible for him, with all his keen and long-disciplined perceptions, not to feel that the real colour of nature had never been attempted by any school ; and that though conventional representations had been given by the Venetians of sunlight and twilight by invariably rendering the whites golden and the blues green, yet of the actual, joyous, pure, roseate

hues of the external world no record had ever been given. He saw also that the finish and specific grandeur of nature had been given, but her fulness, space, and mystery, never; and he saw that the great landscape-painters had always sunk the lower middle tints of nature in extreme shade, bringing the entire melody of colour as many degrees down as their possible light was inferior to nature's; and that in so doing a gloomy principle had influenced them even in their choice of subject. For the conventional colour he substituted a pure straightforward rendering of fact, as far as was in his power; and that not of such fact as had been before even suggested, but of all that is *most* brilliant, beautiful, and inimitable; he went to the cataract for its iris, to the conflagration for its flames, asked of the sea its intensest azure, of the sky its clearest gold. For the limited space and defined forms of elder landscape he substituted the quantity and the mystery of the vastest scenes of earth; and for the subdued chiaroscuro he substituted first a balanced diminution of opposition throughout the scale, and afterwards . . . attempted to reverse the old principle, taking the lowest portion of the scale truly, and merging the upper part in high light. Innovations so daring and so various could not be introduced without corresponding peril; the difficulties that lay in his way were more than any human intellect could altogether surmount."

I will stop upon a detail of this passage, of which the whole technical significance is important, the diction being of great precision, to say that the reader ought to make himself master of all that Ruskin means by "the scale." Any man who has thought about any picture must be aware of "the scale," and must recognise its limited relations in painting as the source of a difficulty—or rather an impossibility—and as therefore the justification of a convention: not an arbitrary convention, but a convention commanded, directed, and controlled by certain truths, and by certain beauties salient amongst those truths. And it is because Ruskin makes the most profound and the most searching confession—the best of all possible confessions—of the convention of relations whereof a painter has to make his picture, that a reader, even with all good will to be taught, may be doubtful, at the end, whether *Modern Painters* does in fact succeed in proving one way to be blessed and the other banned. But I repeat, this is to be studied at first hand from the book. And the book, entering upon Section 11, does justice, once for all, to the painters of tone, even Salvator Rosa and Gaspar Poussin, and to what they achieved, according to their scheme of relations. Albeit the chapter on "Tone" is one of the most technical it is one of the most interesting. In regard to Turner on this matter,

> "In his power of associating cold with warm light no one has ever approached or even ventured into the same field with him. The old masters, content with one simple tone, sacrificed to its unity all the exquisite gradations and varied touches of relief and change by which nature unites her hours with each other. They give the warmth of the sinking sun, overwhelming all things in its gold, but they do not give those grey passages about the horizon where, seen through its dying light, the cool and the gloom of night gather themselves for their victory."

The chapter on "Colour" opens with a very famous page in which the Alban Mount, the Campagna, and La Riccia, fresh in the sun from a stormy shower, is compared with Gaspar Poussin's landscape. Despite its beauty, and certainly because of some of its beauties, it cannot, I venture to think, take a classic place, and I have not extracted it. It is multitudinous as the scene it describes—the enormous and various scenery of the sky after storm, and that of the woods, the mountains, the plain, and the far sea. Not one vain or vacant or lifeless or superfluous word is to be found therein; all is abundance, life, and sight, and the diction is as instant as it is pure. The effort of this description, whereby, in the end, the reader is little moved and yet a little wearied, renews the obstinate question whether it may not be that so many of nature's wonders, as well as so many of a fine author's wonders, are too many for one picture, one page. Not in arrogance, but in humility, might the painter detach one luminous truth of natural fact so that it might be the inspiration of his work, and that work be no portrait of inimitable things, but a beautiful thing of its own kind, owing its beauty to one beauty of nature's. It is true that to try for the organic *all* is more glorious; the few, the one perhaps, did so by genius—Turner. But those who are less than Turner and have been taught that they ought to try for all have made bad pictures. And even this master of literature, trying for all in this splendid description, has not made a good page.

It is in regard to this power over *numerous truth—this most solitary power over numerous truth*—that Ruskin says of the master:

"Turner, and Turner only, would follow and render . . . that mystery of decided line, that distinct, sharp, visible, but unintelligible and inextricable richness, which, examined part by part, is to the eye nothing but confusion and defeat, which, taken as a whole, is all unity, symmetry, and truth."

Ruskin shows us, in another place, how each of the touches of nature is unique and diverse, so that though we cannot tell what such or such a touch may be, yet we know "it cannot be *any* thing"; while even the most dexterous distances of Salvator or Poussin "pretend to secrecy without having anything to conceal, and are ambiguous, not from the concentration of meaning, but from the want of it." This excellent sentence is from those greatly scientific chapters on "Truth of Colour," "Truth of Chiaroscuro," "Truth of Space" as dependent on the focus of the eye, wherein also we read that "Nature is never distinct and never vacant, . . . always mysterious, but always abundant; you always see something, but you never see all"; that the Italians were vacant, and the Dutch distinct, "Nature's rule being . . . 'you shall never be able to count the bricks, but you shall never see a dead wall'"; and that "Turner introduced a new era in landscape art by showing that the foreground might be sunk for the distance, and that it was possible to express immediate proximity to the spectator without giving anything like completeness to the forms of the near objects." This, Turner accomplished, not by "slurred or soft lines (always the sign of vice in art), but by a decisive imperfection, a firm, but partial, assertion of form, which the eye feels indeed to be close home to it, and yet cannot rest upon, nor cling to, nor entirely understand." And let the following passages be quoted from the chapters on "Colour" and "Shadow" before we pass to the chapters on "Skies" and "Mountains": "The ordinary tinsel and trash . . . with which the walls of our Academy are half covered . . . is based on a system of colour beside which Turner's is as Vesta to Cotytto—the chastity of fire to the foulness of earth." "There is scarcely an artist of the present day . . . who does not employ more pure and raw colour than Turner." Then follows the memorable judgment on colour: "I think that the first approach to viciousness of colour . . . is commonly indicated chiefly by a prevalence of purple and absence of yellow"; for Ruskin makes us aware of the almost secret gold of fine colour. Rubens and Turner had, like nature, yellow and black as a "fundamental opposition." In the chapter "Of Truth of Chiaroscuro" Ruskin writes:

> "If we have to express vivid light, our first aim must be to get the shadows sharp and visible; and this is not to be done by blackness, . . . but by keeping them perfectly flat, keen, and even. A very pale shadow, if it be kept flat, if it conceal the details of the object it crosses, if it be grey and cold compared with their colour, and very sharp-edged, will be far more conspicuous, and make everything out of it look a great deal more like sunlight than a shadow ten times its depth, shaded off at the edge, and con-

founded with the colour of the object on which it falls. Now the old masters of the Italian school . . . directly reverse the principle; they blacken their shadows till the picture becomes quite appalling, and everything in it is invisible; but they make a point of losing their edges, and carrying them off by gradation."

Turner will keep the shadows "clear and distinct, and make them felt as shadows, though they are so faint that, but for their decisive forms, we should not have observed them for darkness at all." Turner's shadows are, like nature's, shot with light.

"Words are not accurate enough, nor delicate enough, to express or trace the constant, all-pervading influence of the finer and vaguer shadows throughout his works, that thrilling influence which gives to the light they leave its passion and its power."

Three chapters record the study of the three regions of cloud—the "neglected upper sky" (neglected until Turner drew the cirrus), the middle cloud, and the rain-cloud. There is the noblest pleasure in the writer's confession that he has to find the same words in describing a foreground of nature's and a foreground of Turner's, and that delight is sensibly expressed in the paragraphs on the real and authentic skies, closing with Turner, who had more knowledge of all essential truth "in every wreath of vapour than composed the whole stock of heavenly information which lasted Cuyp and Claude their lives." Turner has infinity in forms of cloud, too mysterious —in wave of cloud and light—to be tested by the eye: infinity outsoaring the mere numbers achieved by lesser painters. "For . . . the greatest *number* is no nearer to infinity than the least, if it be definite number," while infinity is reached by the mere hints of the variety and obscurity of truth. This is in the upper heavens; the lower heavens of the rain-cloud have been the material of nearly all the bad pictures in all the schools: the two windy Gaspar Poussins in our National Gallery, for example:

> "Massive concretions of ink and indigo, wrung and twisted very hard, apparently in a vain effort, to get some moisture out of them; bearing up courageously and successfully against a wind whose effects on the trees in the foreground can be accounted for only on the supposition that they are all of the india-rubber species."

But Ruskin gives some praise to modern artists—Cox and De Wint and Copley Fielding—"before we ascend the solitary throne."

After the heavens come the heavenly mountains, whereof, at this early age, Ruskin had studied the whole organisation, to find it, with a rapture of recognition, confessed in the work of Turner and suggested in every lightest line. In these chapters the subject is less closely a piece of reasoning than in the hard, urgent, and busy first chapters, upon which I have dwelt at length because of their singular importance; but the motive is still explanation, demonstration; the paragraph is hard at work, and only at the closes do we find the relaxation of beauty. In this book Ruskin founded with the colour of the object on which it falls. Now the old masters of the Italian school . . . directly reverse the principle; they blacken their shadows till the picture becomes quite appalling, and everything in it is invisible; but they make a point of losing their edges, and carrying them off by gradation."

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In this book, as in others, Ruskin (perhaps, as I have suggested, for lack of music, and in default, therefore, of a sense of the separateness of an art that imitates nothing) spends the riches of his mind upon the perpetual, and in some kind insoluble, question as to the imitation and selection of nature in painting. Upon this he has said many things—contending things as even a careful student may hold, contrary things as the careless will continue to think. May we not regret the arduous thought spent upon an ambiguous dispute that is nearly an ambiguous quarrel? If he had been learned in music, an art wherein such contention finds no place, would he have made it the centre of his argument on painting?

CHAPTER III

"MODERN PAINTERS"

THE SECOND VOLUME (1846)

"The Second Volume of *Modern Painters* which, though in affected language, yet with sincere and very deep feeling, expresses the first and fundamental law respecting human contemplation of the natural phenomena under whose influence we exist—that they can only be seen with their properly belonging joy and interpreted up to the measure of proper human intelligence, when they are accepted as the work and the gift of a Living Spirit greater than our own"—so runs Ruskin's description of this book. It passes to the study of the Theoretic Faculty, and teaches us to account for the beauty we are formed to perceive by referring it to the attributes of God. In front of this essay stands a moral apology for art, as accessory to the "human dignity and heavenward duty" of mankind, informing the spirit of the artist by "the incorruptible and earnest pride which no applause, no reprobation, can blind to its shortcomings, or beguile of its hope." Spirituality and morality have done ill to forego their divine claim to that art whereto they had a right not only of authority but of very origin and essence. And in the literally divine gift of art is implied the responsibility of choice, so that men are bound to authentic and incorrupt beauty in art as they are bound to justice in action. The happiness which the senses and their spirit take in the good which they contemplate and follow is itself, by its very energy, a sure rule of choice; "it clasps what it loves so hard, that it crushes it if it be hollow." And this happiness, far too high to be called "æsthetic," Ruskin names the Theoretic Faculty.

> "We must advance, as we live on, from what is brilliant to what is pure, and from what is promised to what is fulfilled, and from what is our strength to what is our crown, only observing in all things how that which is indeed wrong, and to be cut up from the root, is *dislike* [of natural things] and not affection."

Beauty is "the bread of the soul," for which virginal hunger is renewed every morning. And good genius was infallibly imaginative in the days before men had "begun to bring to the cross foot their systems instead of their sorrow." From this noble doctrine to the conclusion that a false and impious man could not be a great imaginative painter (a judgment that has been cast in Ruskin's teeth a thousand times), the logic of a young man carried him, not in haste indeed but with the current of deliberate and intentional decision. "I do not think," said Socrates, "that any one who should now hear us, even though he were a comic poet, would say that I talk idly or discourse on matters that concern me not"; but the comic, or more properly the derisive, humour of English writers has not forborne to accuse Ruskin of that which Socrates had confidence would be forborne in his own regard: to charge with vanity an inquiry that concerned man and the honour of his works. And if the question has been held so vain, what common contempt has not mocked the answer framed in the too instant need that a great mind had to be satisfied!

In preparation of his task of referring what we see to be beautiful to what we believe to be Eternal, Ruskin stays upon the old speculation as to the nature of the beauty that so delights our discerning senses as to cause us to refer the felicity to qualities of God. Among attempted "definitions" of beauty (which are descriptions rather than definitions) he does not cite the scholastic sentence "Splendour of Truth," which would have pleased him had he known it, but which does not explain why the aspect of truth is only sometimes splendid; he does quote the vaguer "kind of felicity" of Bacon, which fails to explain the kind. "Nothing is more common," Ruskin says in the following volume, "than to hear people who desire to be thought philosophical, declare that 'beauty is truth' and 'truth is beauty.' I would most earnestly beg every sensible person who hears such an assertion made, to nip the germinating philosopher in his ambiguous bud; and beg him, if he really believes his own assertion, never henceforward to use two words for the same thing." The succeeding chapters on "Unity," "Infinity," "Repose," "Moderation," are masterly in thought, with passages close and fine, as that which discovers the "reason of the agreeableness" of a curve—that it "divides itself infinitely by its changes of direction"; that which asserts "the inseparable dependence" of spirits on each other's being, and their "essential and perfect depending on their Creator's"; and the noble page on "Unity": Subjectional Unity of things submitted to the same influence, which is that of clouds in the wind; Unity of Origin, which is that of branches of a tree; Unity of Sequence, which is that of continued lines or the notes following to make a melody; and Unity of Membership, "which is the unity of things separately imperfect in a perfect whole," as in the notes joining to make a harmony, and, in spiritual creatures, their essential life of happiness in the Creator Spirit. Inordinate variety (such as that of the colouring of some tropical birds) is a defect of the beauty of Unity. The dark background is presented to us (and here Ruskin seems perilously to strain a principle in the application) as a denial of the beauty of Infinity.

> "I think if there be any one grand division, by which it is at all possible to set the productions of painting, so far as their mere plan or system is concerned, on our right and left hands, it is this of light and dark background, of heaven light or of object light."

The abruptness and confidence of the theological assertions, Ruskin protests in a note, became painful to him in after years, but their matter is involved in every thought of this essay. Nothing else is retracted in the revision except something of the veneration given to Michelangiolo, of the love given to Raphael and to Francia, and of a young man's love of the forest and the wild landscape, in impatience of the lovely country of agriculture.

The latter part of the second volume is principally a treatise on "Imagination"—Associative, Penetrative, and Contemplative—a great work of true intellectual passion; and the poverty of any words that try to present the argument by way of mere sketch must discourage me from the attempt; howbeit the task I have set myself throughout is no less than this almost impossible summary, the reader will do well to be more than ever on his guard in order to take the citations as signs and fragments of the perfect life of the work. Let it be said at once that no man could think out the multitude of truths without the use of opposing phrases. It would have been well if in the subsequent revision for later issues (especially the thorough revision of 1883) Ruskin had altered the mere diction of the doctrine as to choice in art. The reader must be warned not to put this amongst the reputed "inconsistencies" until he has read the fourth volume, where the paradox is explained. The real "inconsistencies" are few, and only a reader baffled by the consistency (and there is nothing so exacting, so difficult, so various, as the consistency of a complete theory, nothing so overwhelming to a slothful student) has ever diverted himself by counting them. At the outset Ruskin encounters—by another of those originally paltry accidents that are of use—the definition of Imagination by Dugald Stewart, who does not know imagination from composition, or recomposition, and thinks imagination in landscape to consist in the imaginary landscape of gathering or collocation. It is not this, as no one needs to be told today, but we owe our knowledge in great part to Ruskin's contention; and the word imagination itself (originally "æsthetic," or sensual, and defective) is what it is now by his own act of transformation. Imagination does not combine, but is pre-engaged upon more vital work. In fact the chapter on Imagination Associative does some of its most effectual work in its witty history of the drawing of a tree by a painter without imagination:

> "We will suppose him, for better illustration of the point in question, to have good feeling and correct knowledge of the nature of trees. He probably lays on his paper such a general form as he knows to be characteristic of the tree to be drawn, and such as he believes will fall in agreeably with the other masses of his picture. . . . When this form is set down, he assuredly finds it has done something he did not intend it to do. It has mimicked some prominent line, or overpowered some necessary mass. He begins pruning and changing, and, after several experiments, succeeds in obtaining a form which does no material mischief to any other. To this form he proceeds to attach a trunk, and, working probably on a received notion or rule (for the unimaginative painter never works without a principle) that tree-trunks ought to lean first one way and then the other as they go up, and ought not to stand under the middle of the tree, he sketches a serpentine form of requisite propriety; when it has gone up far enough—that is, till it looks disagreeably long, he will begin to ramify it;

and if there be another tree in the picture with two large branches, he knows that this, by all the laws of composition, ought to have three or four, or some different number; and because he knows that if three or four branches start from the same point they will look formal, therefore he makes them start from points one above another; and because equal distances are improper, therefore they shall start at unequal distances. When they are fairly started, he knows they must undulate or go backwards and forwards, which accordingly he makes them do at random; and because he knows that all forms ought to be contrasted, he makes one bend down while the other three go up. The three that go up, he knows, must not go up without interfering with each other, and so he makes two of them cross. He thinks it also proper that there should be variety of character in them; so he makes the one that bends down graceful and flexible, and, of the two that cross, he splinters one and makes a stump of it. He repeats the process among the more complicated minor boughs, until coming to the smallest, he thinks further care unnecessary, but draws them freely, and by chance. Having to put on the foliage, he will make it flow properly in the direction of the tree's growth; he will make all the extremities graceful, but will be tormented by finding them come all alike, and at last will be obliged to spoil a number of them altogether in order to obtain opposition. They will not, however, be united in this their spoliation, but will remain uncomfortably separate and individually ill-tempered. He consoles himself by the reflection that it is unnatural for all of them to be equally perfect. Now, I suppose that through the whole of this process he has been able to refer to his definite memory or conception of nature for every one of the fragments he has successively added."

Ruskin's own tree-drawing—stem-drawing especially—has an extraordinary power; so has his word, living with the life of the tree, as when he tells you of the lower bough stretched towards you with somewhat of the action of an open hand, palm upwards, and the fingers a little bent.

The penetrative form of the imaginative faculty, he tells us, is proved in its dealing with matter and with spirit. It takes a grasp of things by the heart, seizes outward things from within, and refers them " to that inner secret spring of which the hold is never lost" by Æschylus, Homer, Dante, or Shakespeare. " How did Shakespeare know that Virgilia could not speak?" Contemplative imagination is Shelley's faculty; in painting, it presents the generic or symbolical form of things capable of various accidents; and no fidelity of surface imitation, such as Landseer's, can atone for the loss of the larger relations—of light or colour, for example—brought about by lack of imaginative vision. Contemplative imagination is able, having climbed the sycamore, and waiting, to perceive " the Divine form among the mortal crowd"; how much more it knows in the breaking of bread cannot be told. "Though we cannot, while we feel deeply, reason shrewdly, yet I doubt if, *except* when we feel deeply, we can ever comprehend fully." (One wishes it were lawful, in quoting, to leave out such a futile word as the "ever" in this sentence.) And the intellect is said to sit, in the hour of imagination, upon "its central throne." Incidentally we have this keen point made of one of the differences of imagination and fancy: fancy is sequent and—mobile herself—deals with the mobility (I suppose mobility rather than action, wherewith imagination is mightily concerned) of things; and perhaps I may add that Keats judged more wisely than he knew of the rather common fancy occupying him for the moment when he wrote

> "Ever let the fancy roam;
> Pleasure never is at home."

Doubtless imaginative joy is everywhere supremely at home. "For the moment," I say—for the brief moment; contemplative imagination is in Keats in large and intense perfection.

"Ideal" and "Real" are words that represent another subject of old thought whereon most men have opinions. Let me say briefly (since this may now be said more briefly than when Ruskin said it) that the doctrine of *Modern Painters* would have us to condemn that generalising which is a combination, an assembling of individual characters, and is impotent; and that it would have us to seek the ideal of each individual, by the mental study of the hieroglyphics of his sacred history, and by the hard working portraiture, "the necessary and sterling basis of all ideal art," practised by Raphael, Titian, Tintoretto, Ghirlandajo, Masaccio, John Bellini; and not by Guido or the Caracci. The lack of the individual ideal, with the triviality of accessories, has filled the English Academy "with such a school of portraiture as must make the people of the nineteenth century the shame of their descendants, and the butt of all time." In treating of the vital and ideal beauty of man Ruskin says that the purity of flesh-painting depends on the intensity and warmth of its colour.

The second volume, finally, is very distinctly, and indeed suddenly, patched with the style of Hooker, whom Ruskin had studied with full imitative intention. But the normal and working style is purely of its own day as his genius renewed the day and the hour—that is, it is fresh, full-charged, and exact; and as unlike anything in the past ages as it is unlike the more hesitating, gradated, and reinforced propriety learned by some later English from some later French writers.

CHAPTER IV

"MODERN PAINTERS"

THE THIRD AND FOURTH VOLUMES (1856)

The third volume was written after ten years. Turner had died too soon to receive the amends of the first volume for the rash blame that had embittered his life; and from the irreparable cruelty Ruskin's heart had taken the wound that the young heart accepts from the world; but there were, in their measure, men whom it was not too late to praise, and the generous fear lest one or two true painters should be denied their due until they also had passed from the communion of men upon earth led Ruskin somewhat far in his praises of modern painters who were not Turners. As a prelude stands an essay "Touching the Grand Style," in controversy with Sir Joshua Reynolds and with Dr. Johnson, his ally. It is with no irreverence towards the master whose painting was a refutation of everything shallow that he took in hand to speak or read, and with no irreverence to Johnson, that a reader, fresh from the searching thought of Ruskin, confesses the Discourse here examined to be an instance of the commonplace thinking of the eighteenth century—commonplace (let the paradox be allowed) to the degree of falsity. Loose reasoning in exact English is here, as where Sir Joshua says that the Grand Style of Michelangiolo, "the Homer of painting," "has the least of common nature," whereas it is common and general nature that Sir Joshua's doctrine of the Grand Style does logically allow, and the distinction of individual character that it forbids. If the comparison with Homer were a just one, then the heroic or impossible in art must be mingled (as Ruskin proves), with the very unheroic and quite possible, with details of cookery, amongst others; and having shown the figure of his hero, the painter ought to "spend the greater part of his time (as Homer the greater number of his verses) in elaborating the pattern on his shield." Moreover Sir Joshua and the Doctor think they have profoundly shaken the original idea of beauty by the eighteenth-century device of explaining beauty by custom: "If the whole world," they say, "should agree that Yes and No should change their meanings, Yes would then deny and No would affirm." As though the arbitrary sign of a word had any but a conventional relation to the thing signified; and as though the Yes answered to the question "Do two and two make four?" could be changed for No in its significance, even if the sound of it were No!

In regard to dignity Ruskin says:

> "Paul Veronese opposes the dwarf to the soldier, and the negress to the queen; Shakespeare places Caliban beside Miranda and Autolycus beside Perdita; but the vulgar idealist withdraws his beauty to the safety of the saloon, and his innocence to the seclusion of the cloister, . . . he has neither courage

> to front the monster, nor wit enough to furnish the knave."

Ruskin finds the great style to be the style of a great painter, and knows that no good will can bring it to pass. The reader may remember that it is written in the *Phædo*, "There are, say those who preside at the mysteries, many wand-bearers, but few inspired."

The recurrence of the dispute as to detail, if ever to be lamented, is hardly so in this third volume, wherein it produces some memorable sayings; for example, that touches, seeming coarse when near the eye, are put on by a fine painter with the calculation wherewith an archer draws his bow—according to the distance, "the spectator seeing nothing but the strain of the strong arm"; and that "the best drawing involves a *wonderful perception and expression of* indistinctness." But alas! how shall I attain to know, in two pictures, the indistinctness that is merely indistinctness from that which is wonderfully perceived to be indistinct? If, a little further, we must submit to have it said of the tender Rembrandt that he sacrifices to one light and its relations "the expression of every character . . . which depends on tenderness of shape or tint," we submit for the pleasure of reading, in contrast, of Veronese's "delicate air" and "great system of spacious truth."

> "He unites all . . . in tenderest balance, noting in each hair's-breadth of colour, not merely what its rightness or wrongness is in itself, but what its relation is . . .; restraining, for truth's sake,

> his exhaustless energy, reigning back, for truth's sake, his fiery strength; veiling, before truth, the vanity of brightness; penetrating, for truth, the discouragement of gloom."

After the true and the false "Grand Styles" come considerations of true and false ideals; and I take from a page on the latter this witty passage:

> "A modern German, without invention, . . . seeing a rapid in a river, will immediately devote the remainder of the day to the composition of dialogues between amorous water nymphs and unhappy mariners; while the man of true invention, power, and sense will, instead, set himself to consider whether the rocks in the river could have their points knocked off, or the boats upon it be made with stronger bottoms. . . . The various forms of false idealism have so entangled the modern mind, often called, I suppose ironically, practical."

Compare with this the permission given, two pages later, to the true imagination to create for itself "fairies and naiads, and other such fictitious creatures." How shall the reader be taught to feel, with Ruskin, an infallible moral indignation against this naiad and an infallible moral delight in that? It seems to me impossible. One falls back upon the sure if inexplicable private judgment: "this ideal poem is genius-work and beautiful, and that ideal poem is not." But in confessing despair of learning the lesson as a lesson (it is taught, with all power, purpose, and insistence, by Ruskin, as a lesson) I disclaim the insolence of reproaching him with that moral passion which was to his mind most intelligible, most necessary, and angelically just.

"Purist Idealism," "Naturalist Idealism," and "Grotesque Idealism" in their right forms are studied next, with some repetition, but also with almost overwhelming variety. Ruskin adds to his words on the authentic imagination these, which, when they are heard, confer the vision and the power: "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are." To the imagination he commits the study of general things, of special things, and of unique things in their multitudes. "The choice as well as the vision is manifested to Homer," he says in another place, touching on the controversy that runs throughout. In a passage which has truth in a most strange aspect, he avers that without choice a great painter may paint vain and paltry things "at a sorrowful level, somewhat above vulgarity. It is only when the minor painter takes them on his easel that they become things for the universe to be ashamed of." The chapter on the Grotesque is altogether delightful and wonderful. Grotesque art is that which "arises from healthful but irrational play of the imagination, or from irregular and accidental contemplation of terrible things, or from the confusion of the imagination by the presence of truths which it cannot wholly grasp"; in the last case it is "altogether noble."

> "How is it to be distinguished from the false and vicious grotesque which results from idleness instead of noble rest; from malice, instead of the solemn contemplation of the necessary evil; and from general

degradation of the human spirit, instead of its subjection, or confusion, by thoughts too high for it ? "

Ruskin admits that " the vague and foolish inconsistencies of undisciplined dream " might be mistaken for " the compelled inconsistencies of thought "; and he teaches us the difference in one of the best, most unmistakable, most imaginative, and most conclusive of all the lessons in his books—that of the two griffins. The drawings of the Roman griffin, from the temple of Antoninus and Faustina, and of the Lombard griffin, from the Cathedral of Verona, are by his own hand. The " classical " griffin has technical mastery of composition, collocation, combination—the secondary qualities in no little beauty, but Ruskin takes the man who wrought it through the experiment and piecemeal of his work as but now he took a bad draughtsman through his tree—with exquisite dramatic sense of the man's mind and action, most wittily, with a wit of the very fingers. He shows how the lion and the eagle, put together, have been missed in the winged creature with its trivial eye, and its foot on the top of a flower. Let the reader remember that this griffin was famous, and that no one had perceived the Lombardic griffin until Ruskin studied him. No piecemeal is in *this* winged creature. " He is not merely a bit of lion and a bit of eagle, but whole lion incorporate with whole eagle." He has the carnivorous teeth, " and the peculiar hanging of the jaw at the back, which marks the flexible mouth " ; he has no cocked ears, like the other, to catch the wind in flight (Ruskin says that the classical griffin would have an ear-ache when he "got home"—a phrase of "heart-easing mirth"); he—the Lombard—has the throat, the strength, the indolence of the lion: "he has merely got a poisonous winged dragon to hold, and for such a little matter as that, he may as well do it lying down." With the utmost dramatic sense is the grasp on the dragon told in this fine page, to which the reader is bound to have recourse if he would know true griffinism at all. "Composing legalism does nothing else than err." The passionate imagination knows not how to transgress.

From the chapters on "Finish" let us clearly learn that what Ruskin calls by this name is life—no less. His illustrations of Claude's and Constable's tree-drawing and of the real and vital growth of trees are to this point; and nowhere is the extraordinary power of his own hand more manifest than in the plate "Strength of Old Pine." None but his word would describe his work. "The Use of Pictures" (a very knot of reasoning) and a brief history of the human spirit of the artist, antique and modern, bring us to the famous "Pathetic Fallacy." This fallacy is a fiction (wanton, fanciful, imaginative, or more purely passionate) in our reading of natural things according to the feeling of our own hearts. Obviously it is chiefly poetry that is here in question; and the reader should understand that Ruskin is not writing of poets who are no poets; he admits two orders of poets, but no third, as doubtless a musician would admit two orders of musicians—two very arts of music, two muses—but no third; and he places—agreeing therein with the greater number of critics—one order higher than the other, as a musician need not do in contemplating his own double-peaked hill. Ruskin makes an admirable opposition of the image without fallacy of Dante to the image with fallacy of Coleridge; pausing for a moment (only a moment, for the chapter is intended to treat chiefly of noble and passionate fallacy) at the fallacy which is not poetic at all because it is assigned, as by Pope, to the wrong passion, and is cold. But I confess all this reasoning on poetry seems to fail—not impotently, but with vital effort, and because of some prohibition from the beginning of the task—to fail to prove or even to demonstrate anything we do not know, or to disprove anything we feel. A whole chapter further on, for instance, shows Walter Scott to be better than a sentimentalist, better than a poet who works with difficulty, better than a poet who is self-conscious, better as a poet-seer than a mere poet-thinker, and moreover a thorough representative of his time by his love of nature, of the past, of colour, and of the picturesque, by his sadness and lack of personal faith, and so forth. But at the end of the argument we shall not have been persuaded to take Scott to be a poet possessed of the spirit of poetry. The essay, however, though a vain persuasion, is an excellent commentary; take the sentence, for example, which explains how we have pleasure in Kingsley's fallacious "cruel foam," not because the words "fallaciously describe foam, but because they faithfully describe sorrow." The chapter has been popular, for it reaches none of the inner concentrations of thought that make *Modern Painters* arduous reading to a real reader. The chapter following, on "Classical Landscape," deals also with poetry. To the question whether the modern with his fancy does not see something in nature that Homer could not see, Ruskin replies that the Greek had his own feeling—that of faith and not of fallacy. "He never says the waves rage, or the waves are idle. But he says there is somewhat in, and greater than, the waves, which rages, and is idle, and that he calls a god." Nor will Ruskin consent to have Homer's Hera, cuffing the contentious Artemis about the ears, too much interpreted. Let no one think to explain away "my real, running, beautiful, beaten Diana, into a moon behind clouds." Happy too, by its phrase, in the finely elaborate contrast of the antique and the modern spirit, is this passage on the Greek and the gods:

> "To ask counsel of them, to obey them, to sacrifice to them, to thank them for all good, this was well; but to be utterly downcast before them, or not to tell them his mind in plain Greek if they seemed to him to be conducting themselves in an ungodly manner—this would not be well."

And happy in thought is a passage on the modern who accepts sympathy from nature that he does not believe in, and gives her sympathy that he does not believe in (but should this part of the phrase be so positive as the other?), whereas the Greek had no sympathy at all with "actual wave and woody fibre."

The exquisite chapter on "The Fields" traces the history of the landscape of vegetation, ancient and mediæval, discovers the first sky in an illuminated manuscript and the first leaf in its borders—how it unfolded there; and tracks the change in the human spirit in regard to the forest, wherein the man of the Middle Ages looked to meet with an enemy in ambush or a bear, whereas the ancient "expected to meet one or two gods, but no banditti"; and "The Rocks" is a magnificent study of mountains as man beheld them in the ancient world and in the altered ages. Ruskin gives modern man, with his love of breeze, of shadows, of the ruling and dividing clouds, over to the gibe of Aristophanes—that he would "speak ingeniously concerning smoke," that he disbelieves in Jupiter, and crowns the whirlwind. Exquisite play is mingled with all the philosophy of these historic chapters. A summary but splendid history of colour in the arts—a spiritual history of the colours man has loved—opens the question—treated at length by other pens long after *Modern Painters* was written—of the sense of colour in Antiquity; and the study returns to Turner, the man who was first in the essentially modern painting of nature in place of the human form, as Bacon was first in the modern study of nature instead of the human mind. But in "The Moral of Landscape" Turner himself and all lovers of nature are arraigned with extreme austerity to justify, or rather to excuse, that passion for landscape wherewith some of the greatest of human intellects have not been charged; and it is only after a meditation, full of misgiving, nay, of suffering, and courage, and after trying all things—all human wandering, from that of the truant schoolboy studying nature despite of duty and discipline, to that of the poet, astray on one of the infinite ways, in one of the infinite directions, of loss—it is only then that this teacher permits himself to bless the human love of nature. With "trembling hope" and the profound decision that is to be won from the heart of hearts of a dreadful doubt, he calls finally upon the love and knowledge of landscape to mend specifically the foolish spirit of a century bent upon "annihilating time and space by steam" (as people said in 1850—but the saying was confessedly mere rhetoric, and certainly a vulgar kind), whereas time is what wisdom would seek to gain, and space is full of beauty upon which wisdom would be glad to pause.

The volume closes with a little history of "The Teachers of Turner," which compares Scott, neglected as a boy, with Turner, educated a little in the formalism of a low degree of classical knowledge, which did, in fact, show the way to larger interests. Albeit Turner had to await his opportunity to steal from the Egerian wells to the Yorkshire streams, and "from Homeric rocks, with laurels at the top and caves at the bottom" to Alpine precipices carrying the pine, yet he gained something from the restraint, and was thereafter able to watch with pleasure "the staying of the silver fountain [the garden fountain] at its appointed height in the sky" as well as to pore with delight upon the unbound river. But, ordered, as a boy, to draw elevations of Renaissance buildings, and commissioned as a youth to draw Palladian mansions for their owners, Turner never loved or understood architecture; whereas Scott, if he learnt little of it, liked it heartily. "A forced admiration of Claude and a fond admiration of Titian," and of all the great Venetian landscape, are traced by Ruskin in Turner's early work; with Cuyp Turner matched himself in emulation, and he suffered injury from the example of Vandevelde. Then follow some vigorous pages about Claude. "Tenderness of perception and sincerity of purpose" Ruskin attributes to him; and confesses that he it was who first set the sun in heaven. But Claude's way of misunderstanding "the main point" is proved by Ruskin in the case of Æneas drawing his bow, from the *Liber Veritatis*.

From the ending of this volume, which refers to the Crimean War, the reader should carry two phrases briefer and more concentrated than is usual with an author so bent on exposition. One is "the sunlight of deathbeds," and the other (on the sudden faults of nations) "For great, *accumulated* . . . cause, their foot slides in due time." And this is memorable as the note of a watcher of public things:

> "I noticed that there never came news of the explosion of a powder-barrel . . . but the Parliament lost confidence immediately in the justice of the war; reopened the question whether we ever should have engaged in it, and remained in a doubtful and repentant state of mind until one of the enemy's powder-barrels blew up also."

Defending himself against the not unrighteous charge that he not only neglected but scorned German philosophy, Ruskin avers, in his Appendix, that he is right to condemn "by specimen":

> "He who seizes all that he plainly discerns to be valuable, and *never is unjust but when he cannot honestly help it*, will soon be enviable in his possessions, and venerable in his equity."

The humorous phrase takes us on many years, to *Fiction Fair and Foul*, in the *Nineteenth Century*, where Ruskin related his refusal to be troubled to read a certain novel he had heard praised; the "situation" of the story, they told him, was that of two people who had "compromised themselves in a boat"; foul and foolish. Not without pain or incredulity has the reader to learn that the passage so ridiculed is the flight and the return of Maggie Tulliver. Injustice may be as inevitable as "stumbling or being sick," but evitable was the proclamation of this stray, uninstructed, and unjustified judgment. The pardon of these implicit injustices surely depends upon their privacy, upon the silence that is not irrevocable, and on the secrecy wherewith a man keeps his own counsel as to his prejudice.

The volumes are less difficult reading as the work goes forward, and the fourth has had ten readers for one reader of the earlier three. Partly for this cause the page on the Calais tower (placed in the late edition at the beginning of the volume) became famous: it evoked what its author calls the weak enthusiasms of those who missed the essential beauty because they thought themselves elected to admire the " style." It is a passage of a chapter directed to correct and chastise that popular ideal of the " picturesque " abroad and the " neat " at home wherewith many thousands go and come across the Channel.

> " The large neglect, the noble unsightliness of it; the record of its years written so visibly, yet without sign of weakness or decay; its stern wasteness and gloom, eaten away by the Channel winds, and overgrown by the bitter sea grasses; its slates and tiles all shaken and rent, and yet not falling; its desert of brickwork full of bolts, and holes, and ugly fissures, and yet strong, like a bare brown rock; its carelessness of what any one thinks or feels about it, putting forth no claim, having no beauty or desirableness, pride, nor grace; yet neither asking for pity; not, as ruins are, useless and piteous, feebly or fondly garrulous of better days; but useful still, going through its own daily work—as some old fisherman beaten grey by storm, yet drawing his daily nets; so it stands, with no complaint about its past youth, in blanched and meagre massiveness and serviceableness, gathering human souls together underneath it; the sound of its bells for prayer still rolling through its rents; and the grey peak of it seen far across the sea, principal of the three that rise above the waste of surfy sand and hillocked shore—the lighthouse for life, and the belfry for labour, and this for patience and praise."

Appropriate to the time, fifty years ago, is the rebuke that follows of the painter who went in search of " fallen cottage, deserted village, blasted heath, mouldering castle,"—joyful sights to him alone of mankind, so that they did but "show jagged angles of stone and timber"; true, he mingled with his pleasures a slight tragical feeling, "a vague desire to live in cottages," a partly romantic, partly humble, sympathy. Ruskin showed him his own triviality in contrast with the sympathy of genius which was Turner's. Tintoret had a like genius, but without humour. Veronese had such a sympathy, but without tragedy. Rubens wants grace and mystery. In Turner alone Ruskin finds the complete sympathy; failing only as he was human. From the immeasurably various opened world before such a genius Turner chose great things, not contenting himself with the personal impression that might make odds and ends dear to him, as Ruskin's young pre-Raphaelites were doing, leaving the noble things to be made into "vignettes for annuals," or to be painted vilely. Surely the surviving slander that Ruskin would have his disciples to "select nothing and to neglect nothing" might have been silenced once for all by the note to this same page, which proves him to have directed none but the preparatory studies of young learners by that celebrated phrase. Nor is any controversy possible in face of another page of this volume:

> "If a painter has inventive power he is to treat his subject [by] . . . giving not the actual facts of it, but the impression it made on his mind."

Ruskin supplied his future opponents with this word and with this thought which they brandished and vaunted on their side of some supposed controversy. In truth, he allows a "great inventive landscape painter" to do what he likes, to give not the image, but the spirit of a place, to go down into a jumbled and formless lower valley of the Alps with his mind full of the terrors of a pass above; and in that power of impression to transform the rocks. But let the uninventive beware of the paltry work of composing; let *him* learn to make portraits of places, and record for us the battlefield for the sake of strategy, the castle before it moulders away, the abbey before it is pulled to the ground, the beast before it is extinct, the topography of Venice before the city is destroyed; that is art enough for him. But, unfortunately, he is not to be trusted for facts; and Ruskin finds that the dull Canaletto, far from making a picture, cannot so much as record exactly where a house stood. If any one shall say, moreover, that by this or that invention Turner did wrong inventively, Ruskin replies, "The dream said not so to Turner."

The succeeding chapters are a long lesson on the initial and unending difficulties of illumination, and of the degrees of pictorial vision, from which I must quote no more than this on relations or "values":

> "Despise the earth; fix your eyes on its gloom, and forget its loveliness; and we do not thank you for your languid or despairing perception of brightness in heaven. But rise up actively from the earth,—learn what there is in it, know its colour and form . . . and if *after that* you can say 'heaven is bright,' it will be a precious truth."

And this from the study of colour as more than all else a painter's business:

> "The student may be led into folly by philosophers, and into falsehood by purists; but he is always safe if he holds the hand of a colourist."

And this, on Mystery:

> "All distinct drawing must be bad drawing, and . . . nothing can be right till it is unintelligible. . . . Excellence of the highest kind, without obscurity, cannot exist."

Assuredly, without difficulty from the objections of modern readers, who are convinced already, Ruskin controls by means of these truths his own doctrine of detail. It is the perception of mystery that the greatest of all masters have added to the perception of truth—Turner, Tintoret, and Paul Veronese, mysterious painters, whose perception, "first as to what is to be done, and then of the means of doing it, is so colossal that I always feel in the presence of their pictures just as other people would in that of a supernatural being." The student should weigh well the words "perception of mystery" and all that they imply, as distinct from "power of dispelling mystery" or any such phrase. All invention, moreover, all mystery, and all intricacy must close in a simple and natural pictorial vision, which would be like a child's if it were not more comprehensive. Finally, "The right of being obscure is not one to be lightly claimed." From this point the fourth volume of

Modern Painters becomes chiefly a direct study of nature, a study indescribably rich but not to be followed by notes and summaries. An exception there is in the digression on the character and conditions of the Valais peasantry, in "Mountain Gloom," a chapter full of poignant thoughts. Some fault of reasoning may be detected in the attribution to their religion of a peculiar melancholy in these people, whereas to the same cause a different effect must be referred amongst the equally unworldly countrymen of Lombardy, and whereas Ruskin himself, after writing with bitterness of this religious source of sorrow, goes on to show that he and they and all of us have cause enough of grief without it. Exquisite is the sad record of the work of the husbandman—without books, or thoughts, or attainments, or rest—at his small crops on the ledges of these divine mountain-sides, where "the meadows run in and out like inlets of lake among the harvested rocks, sweet with perpetual streamlets." The historical digression, in "Mountain Glory," studies the mountains in their relation to the history of the mind of man, as the answering aspect of man towards the mountains was studied in an earlier page; and here again I lose the proof of the argument. Ruskin seems to compel the presence of the mountains to account for contrary things, rises and falls, in the history of Italian painting. And the accompanying inquiry as to the mountain influence upon literary power seems to be one of the few enterprises of this courageous mind that do not altogether justify themselves; but even here how much splendour of thought!

CHAPTER V

"MODERN PAINTERS"

THE FIFTH VOLUME (1860)

THE last volume of this enormous work of thought, imagination, sincerity, and devotion is chiefly a continuation of the study of natural landscape, of form in the leaf, anatomy in the branch; of the play of these creatures of earth with the light from the skies, and the unimaginable shadows that "stumble over everything they come across"—a world of its own that of the experimental shadow! This volume is a study of the whole garden: "How have we ravaged instead of kept it!" and of the unalterable skies. The more intent the study is, the more impassioned —a look of adoration at arm's length, a kiss at close quarters. The large sense of vegetation, that unsuffering creature, with its youth, age, death perpetually rehearsed, grows yet more poetic when it is the little will of the bud to grow to a pinnacle that Ruskin looks into, with his incomparably lovely botany. He tells us of the trees that are builders with the shield, and of those that are builders with the sword, according to the manner in which they defend their buds; he tells us what, measured month by month, is the year's work, and, by the periodicity of the life of vegetation itself, what is the age's; how the young leaves, "like the young bees," keep out of each other's way. The exquisite science of the book is for the service of art, for the aspect of the leaf in nature, and for the praise of the leaf-drawing of Titian and Holbein, and for the refutation of the leaf-drawing of Ruysdael and Hobbema. Ruskin shows us, in boughs, the will, fire, and fantasy of growth measured by the strong law of nervous life and strong law of material attraction, the height of a tree controlled by the gravitation that sinks the fall of lead. He shows us the whole mathematical truths of actual and of pictorial balance in wild asymmetric nature and in Turner; and the incoherence, the lack of equilibrium, in the dull-leaved branch of Salvator Rosa; and how the false work lacks wit as well as poise. He proves to us the conditions of the leaf-bearing bough—harmony, obedience, distress (or difficulty), and happy inequality. Ruskin has said that he was content with himself for one thing—he had done justice to the pine. But he has done justice also to the oak, and to the poplar. Something that belongs to the special leaf, to the division of the twigs, to the definite design that by their tips all the twigs and branches together draw as the figure of the tree, something that is peculiar to the complexion of the leaf and to its green, and is the spirit of the woods, abides about the names of all trees in these pages.

"Between the earth and man arose the leaf. Between the heaven and man arose the cloud. His life being partly as the falling leaf, and partly as the flying vapour."

But the chapters on clouds here following—" Cloud Balancings," " Cloud Flocks," " Cloud Chariots," " The Angel of the Sea "—are not only scientific studies of clouds carried further than those in the first volume, and observations multiplied, but are probably intended to mend the former work as literature. The page of sixteen years before had been rather abruptly patched with decorated and splendid passages ; the page of the last volume is more glorious, the words are more abundant. Ruskin himself has half disowned the eloquence in the writing of the earlier volumes, but in truth this fifth volume outdoes all that had gone before. The purpose, nevertheless, is as severe as ever ; here, as throughout this long task —" the investigation of the beauty of the visible world "—it was always, as Ruskin says in regard to the reader, " accuracy I asked of him, not sympathy ; patience, not zeal ; apprehension, not sensation."

The following part of this volume deals with certain laws of art, such as that of composition, not fully treated elsewhere. And here again we seem to be cast back upon the single law of Genius. As Ruskin banned " every kind of falsity," yet allowed Rubens to make an horizon aslant with the drift of a stormy picture, and praised Vandyck for his grey roses ; so, as to composition, he tells us that no expression, truth to nature, nor sentiment can win him to look at a picture twice if it is ill composed, yet the composition cannot be prescribed by law ; it is to be as a great painter makes it. The reader will, of course, understand that " composition " in this chapter and " composition " in the great chapters on the " Faculties of the Imagination " must be taken with separate meanings; in the latter case a false composition is implied. Ruskin has, needless to say, studied the true composition of his great painters as deeply as their other qualities, and he gives a technical lesson thereon in " The Law of Help," starting from the contrast of the decomposition which is death and the composition which is natural life, and showing true pictorial composition to be coherence, unity, and vitality itself.

> " In true composition, everything not only helps everything else *a little*, but helps with its utmost power. . . . Not a line, not a spark of colour, but is doing its very best."

And this should correct the doubts of those who have repeated that Ruskin teaches finish to be " an added truth." He never meant thereby a piecemeal truth; for what is added in a fine picture is added, he tells us in this chapter, inevitably and in unity; and even when he represents a true artist asking himself where, in his picture, he can " crowd in " another detail, another thought, to think this to be an afterthought or a later detail would be to misinterpret Ruskin's whole body of teaching. Inferior artists, he says, are afraid of finish not because they have unity, but because they have it not. Nor have they the *deed*, which is the act of purpose. The greatest deed is creation, and the creation of life. In " The Law of Perfectness " we have the fruit of an additional study of

Titian—"the winter was spent mainly in trying to get at the mind of Titian"—especially in his execution of colour; that is, the ground, the working in, the striking over of colours. "The Dark Mirror" sums up the four landscape orders of Europe: Heroic (Titian); Classical (Nicolo Poussin); Pastoral (Cuyp); Contemplative (Turner); and two spurious forms: Picturesque and Hybrid. The reader has to resign himself to the banishment from Ruskin's thought of all the great French landscape. Once or twice he names French modern work with horror as something deathly; but what he knows, if anything, of the young Corot, for example, or of Millet, one cannot so much as conjecture. For Venetian art he claims a share of the Greek spirit which is able to look without shrinking into the darkness, unentangled in the melancholy war of the northern souls of Holbein and Dürer, unconquered by the evil that not only entangled but possessed Salvator. Therefore one chapter is called "The Lance of Pallas" and the other "The Wings of the Lion," and both deal with the race and character of Titian. A courageous "but not very hopeful or cheerful faith" (and this, in spite of the gaiety of interest which is Mr. Meredith's, might be a phrase of this last-named master's teaching) is that which is "rewarded by clear practical success and splendid intellectual power." And this was in the highest degree Shakespeare's; for although "at the close of Shakespeare's tragedy nothing remains but dead march and clothes of burial," yet he was able to endure that close. It was also that of the

Greek tragedy, with this difference in the sorrow—that it is connected with sin by the Greek and not by Shakespeare; and this difference in the close—that with the Greek there is a promise of divine triumph and rising again. Serene is Homer's spirit, with an added cheerfulness of his own, and practical hope in present things.

> " The gods have given us at least this glorious body and this righteous conscience."

Therefrom came conquest; and the destroying, oppressing, slaying, and betraying gods turned kind; Artemis guarded their flocks, and Phœbus, " lord of the three great spirits of life—Care, Memory, and Melody—" turned healer. Ruskin shows us the Venetians also courageous, but a little sadder on the surface, a little less serious beneath, having arisen from, and partly rejected, asceticism. Seizing truth of colour as only he can, he makes us understand much by telling us that they sunburn all their hermits to a splendid brown. And he tells us of the dealings of the sea with this people that despised agriculture and had no gardens, but a " perpetual May " of the waters. Nay, not a perpetual May; we may join issue with Ruskin as to the seasons of the sea. Did even he, who knew better than to follow the fashion, and who went to the Alps when the gentians were blue—did even he not know the May that kindles the Adriatic and is not perpetual, or it would not be May? But how exquisitely is this written of the Venetian citizen, with its allusions to certain Greeks—to Anacreon, to Aristophanes, and to Hippias Major:

> "No swallow chattered at his window, nor, nestled under his golden roofs, claimed the sacredness of his mercy; no Pythagorean fowl taught him the blessings of the poor, nor did the grave spirit of poverty rise at his side to set forth the delicate grace and honour of lowly life. No humble thoughts of grasshopper sire had he, like the Athenian; no gratitude for gifts of olive; no childish care for figs, any more than thistles."

As usual Ruskin betakes himself to the religion of the Venetians; the most he knows of it was told him in the nursery at Herne Hill; submitting to this, and to the cruel passing-over, as something non-existent, of the enormous work of one faculty of religion—Compassion—that changed the face of nations, we shall hear in this chapter great things, nobly said, about the Venetian soul of man. It is a pity that half a page of refutation should be wasted in condescension to so vulgar an English modern opinion as that the Venetian lord painted on his knees was a hypocrite. But the worldly end of this religious art and majestic intellect (Titian was not less religious than Tintoret, but "the religion of Titian is like that of Shakespeare—occult behind his magnificent equity") came to pass and is accounted for by Ruskin after his own subtle way:

> "In its roots of power and modes of work; in its belief, its breadth, and its judgment, I find the Venetian mind perfect; . . . wholly noble in its sources, it was wholly unworthy in its purposes."

The Venetian believed in the religion, but "he desired the delight." It is difficult to the reader thus to divide source from purpose. When Ruskin says that Titian painted the Assumption "because" he "enjoyed rich masses of red and blue, and faces flushed with sunlight," I confess I need to be told that this "because" refers to purpose and not to source. Is there not, finally, something omitted in this history of Venetian art as also in the histories of Florentine, and of Greek, and of Northern, and of French, and of Lombard, and of all arts whereof Ruskin has written the vicissitudes—and is not this the law of movement and of alteration? He goes far, goes deep, goes close, to explain the inevitable change which comes about perhaps through no action that man can know by searching or can arrest for an hour.

The following chapter, "Dürer and Salvator," is upon art reconciled to sorrow, and upon the "Resurrection of Death" of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. First of Salvator Rosa, "the condemned Salvator," the bearer of the last signs of the spiritual life in the art of Europe, who named himself "Despiser of wealth and of death." "Two grand scorns," says Ruskin, but "the question is not for man what he can scorn but what he can love." Dürer, on the other hand, was quiet, riding in fortitude with Death, like his own Knight. Claude and Gaspar Poussin, "classical," but incapable of the Greek or the Roman spirit, renounced the labour and sorrow whereto man is born and so became ornamental, renounced the pursuit of wealth and so became pastoral and pretended to study nature; they made selections from amongst the gods. In their works "Minerva rarely presents herself, except to be insulted by the judgment of Paris." And in this chapter occurs the last elaborate passage on Claude, the man of "fine feeling for beauty of form and considerable tenderness of perception," whose "aërial effects are unrivalled," and whose seas are "the most beautiful in old art"; but who was an artist without passion. For its humour I must quote the description of Claude's "St. George and the Dragon":

> "A beautiful opening in woods by a river side; a pleasant fountain . . . and rich vegetation. . . . The dragon is about the size of ten bramble leaves, and is being killed by the remains of a lance . . . in his throat, curling his tail in a highly offensive and threatening manner. St. George, notwithstanding, on a prancing horse, brandishes his sword, at about thirty yards' distance from the offensive animal. A semicircular shelf of rocks encircles the foreground, by which the theatre of action is divided into pit and boxes. Some women and children having descended unadvisedly into the pit are helping each other out of it again. . . . A prudent person of rank has taken a front seat in the boxes, crosses his legs, leans his head on his hand; . . . two attendants stand in graceful attitudes behind him, and two more walk away under the trees, conversing on general subjects."

As to Claude's "Worship of the Golden Calf," "in order better to express the desert of Sinai, the river is much larger, and the vegetation softer. Two people, uninterested in idolatrous ceremonies, are rowing in a pleasure-boat on the river." Poussin's "strong but degraded mind" is the subject of graver phrases; all he does well has been better done by Titian; he also in his manner is condemned for lack of passion. The pastoral landscape, more properly so-called—Cuyp and Teniers the type of its painters—was lower yet, destitute not of spiritual character only, but of spiritual thought. Cuyp can paint sunlight, but paints unthoughtfully. "Nothing happens in his pictures, except some indifferent person's asking the way of somebody else, who, by his cast of countenance, seems not likely to know it." Paul Potter "does not care even for sheep, but only for wool."

> "Titian could have put issues of life and death into the face of a man asking his way; nay, into the back of him. . . . He has put a whole scheme of dogmatic theology into a row of bishops' backs at the Louvre. And for dogs, Velasquez has made some of them nearly as grand as his surly Kings."

It is in the same chapter that Ruskin speaks of the trivial sentiment and caricature of Landseer, who "gave up the true nature of the animal" for the sake of a jest. And by this mature judgment the reader should correct a passage of praise in an earlier volume.

In the chapter that contrasts Wouvermans and Angelico, Ruskin tells us how he finds it impossible to "lay hold of the temper" of some of the Dutch painters, workmanlike though they are. Wouvermans and Berghem are amongst the masters of the "hybrid landscape," intended to combine the attractions of the other schools, but they have a "clay-cold, ice-cold incapacity of understanding what pleasure meant." Music, dancing, hunting, boating, fishing, bathing, and child-play are sprinkled in a picture of Wouvermans, but the fishing and bathing go on close together; no one turns to look at the hunting; hart and hind gallop across the middle of the river touching bottom, but a man dives at the edge where it is deep; the dancing has no spring; the buildings are part ruin, part villa. Ruskin holds this paralysis of dramatic invention to be the consequence of the desire to please sensual patrons by offering them "inventoried articles of pleasure." "Unredeemed carnal appetite" seems to the reader a somewhat violent sentence for this cold incontinence of incident, this trifling of convention, but Ruskin has never allowed trifling to be a trifle, whether in art or in life. The study of Angelico, master of the Purist school ("I have guarded my readers from over-estimating that school") opposes spirituality to this luxury about which the reader has perhaps his doubts. As for Angelico, a dramatic or imaginative movement of some embracing angel amongst his groups seems to me to save him, barely, from weakness; and it is doubtful whether we may name any weak thing as typically spiritual.

Ruskin goes back to Turner in the chapter called "The Two Boyhoods," which paints the Venice of the young Giorgione, and the Maiden Lane, the Chelsea, the Covent Garden, and Thames side of the

London child. The description of Venice is somewhat too gorgeous. It is hardly possible for any one who knows Italy to imagine her at any time all alabaster, bronze, and marble, splendidly draped. But like this untempered Venice of fancy is Ruskin's page. It is one of the beautiful passages that I do not extract, marking only with pleasure the quiet phrase that explains how no weak walls, low-roofed cottage, or straw-built shed could be built over those "tremulous streets." Turner's only drawing of an English clergyman is excellently described, and Turner in the fogs, Turner among the ships, Turner in the outer ways of the trampled market. Ever after, his foregrounds had "a succulent cluster or two of green-grocery at the corners." But the England of his day did graver things to him even than the nurturing of this great childhood in squalor. Ruskin gives us the exposition of the first picture painted by Turner with his whole strength—the Garden of the Hesperides of 1806, as a great religious picture of that opening century, and its religion the triumph of the dragon of Mammon or Covetousness, sleepless, human-voiced, *il gran nemico* of Dante, set by Turner in a paradise of smoke, conceived by the painter's imaginative intellect as iron-hearted, with a true bony contour, organic, but like a glacier. And as an earlier chapter had ended: "This" (the labour, that is, of Albert Dürer), "is indeed the labour which is crowned with laurel and has the wings of the eagle. It was reserved for another country to prove . . . the labour which is crowned with fire and has the wings of the bat"; so this sad chapter on the "Nereid's Guard" closes with the fulfilment of the menace; the "other country" and the other age were Turner's. Ruskin's beloved painter was also, like Salvator himself, in part overcome of evil. And when he fought his way to nature and the skies, painting sun-*colour* as Claude and Cuyp had painted but sun*shine*, the world not only rejected but reviled him. "One fair dawn or sunset obediently beheld" would have set it right, and justified his painting of the coloured Apollo. His critics shouted, "Perish Apollo. Bring us back Python." "And Python came," adds Ruskin, "came literally as well as spiritually; all the perfect beauty and conquest which Turner wrought is already withered." This refers to the destruction that has come so soon upon the very material of Turner's work—wrecked, faded, and defiled, yet even so better than any other landscape painting unmarred.

No man, before Turner, had painted clouds scarlet. "Hesperid Ægle and Erytheia [the blushing one] fade into the twilights of four thousand years unconfessed." And in this new page on the great subject of colour Ruskin teaches us that albeit form is of incalculably greater importance, an error in colour is graver than an error in form, because of relation; the form belongs to the thing it defines, the colour to the thing and to all about it; to deal falsely with the colour "breaks the harmony of the day." I do not know a more luminous thought on colour than this, even in these shining pages. Few have been the supreme colourists: Titian, Giorgione, Veronese, Tintoret, Correggio, Reynolds, and Turner, as Ruskin counts them—seven; whereas of the other qualities or powers of art the great masters have been many.

Under the title of "Peace" the last great chapter of this great work closes, not peacefully, but with passionate grief. Turner had been dead nearly twenty years, but the cruelty of the "criticism" that had made his life lonely and painful had never ceased to wound his friend.

> "There never was yet . . . isolation of a great spirit so utterly desolate. . . . My own admiration was wild in enthusiasm, but it gave him no ray of pleasure; he could not make me at that time understand his main meanings; he loved me, but cared nothing for what I said, and was always trying to hinder me from writing, because it gave pain to his fellow-artists. . . . To censure Turner was acutely sensitive. . . . He knew that however little his higher power could be seen, he had at least done as much as ought to have saved him from wanton insult, and the attacks upon him in his later years were to him not merely contemptible in their ignorance, but amazing in their ingratitude."

Let the reader bear in mind that it is was precisely in the first year that showed a Royal Academy *without* any pictures of Turner's that the "Times" had learnt to call them "works of inspiration." It is characteristic of Ruskin that he cannot take the customary comfort and say that Turner learnt in the sorrow he underwent what he had not learnt in the joy he missed; the last pages of *Modern Painters* protest against this form of commonplace. They utter, finally, one of many menaces against a world intent upon gain, and negligent of art and nature. Men in England had learnt, say these mournful closing sentences, not to say in their hearts "There is no God," but to say aloud, "There is a foolish God"; "His orders will not work"; "Faith, generosity, honesty, zeal, and self-sacrifice are poetical phrases"; and "The power of man is only power of prey: otherwise than the spider, he cannot design; otherwise than the tiger, he cannot feed."

CHAPTER VI

"THE SEVEN LAMPS OF ARCHITECTURE" (1849)

THIS was the first illustrated book published by Ruskin. The illustrated volumes of *Modern Painters* followed it closely with their splendid cloud and tree drawing. In the *Seven Lamps* the etchings are of course architectural, but they are etchings of a living stone. A vitality of construction, of time, of shadow and light, and of the power and weight of stone are in these plates, overbitten and not altogether technically successful as they are; I speak of those of the first edition, afterwards withdrawn. Ruskin made his drawings from windows, lofts and ladders, holding on as he might, and bit the plates hurriedly on his journey home.

The book was an incident of the third volume of *Modern Painters*—a pause upon the topic of architecture, but a pause as it were in haste and full of some of the most intent and urgent labour of John Ruskin's life. There was no need for despatch when primroses were to be outlined, or when a lax, random weaving of grasses grown to the flower in June was to be woven again with a delicate pencil: for another year would make amends for any possible lapse of purpose or interruption of work, yielding new flowers to take the place of the old. A student of vegetation may "wake, and learn the world, and sleep again," not lying in wait for changes, but confident of that repetition which makes nature old and mystical to memory, and of that renewal which makes her young and simple to hope—a mother to the spirit and a child to the eye. The painter of mountains will not be defrauded by years of the ancient line upon the sky. The linked memories of all generations are not long enough, in all, to outwatch and to record a change in a little hill. He may be blind, or mad, or absent, but the shape of a bay will await his light, his reason, or his return. Not so with the student of ancient buildings, who would arrest the action of time, and who therefore must make his own hour of labour elastic with application and with vigilance; albeit mere time, Ruskin tells us, unbuilds so slowly that if men took pains, they might repair his action—not by the futile effort of "restoration" but by honest proppings and shorings that should confess their own date and purpose and make no confusions in the history of construction. It is not the unbuilding of time, therefore, that presses the student, but the destruction wrought with violence by man, contemptuous and impatient of the work of the past, or confident that he can do something better with the stones unset and set up in another fashion. Ruskin was obliged to delay the third volume of *Modern Painters* while he made his drawings of that which no eye should see and no hand should copy again. A note to the preface of *The Seven Lamps* tells us that the writer's "whole time has been lately occupied in taking drawings from one side of buildings, of which the masons were knocking down the other."

The book, taking its place as an interlude in what was the continuous work of the young "Graduate of Oxford," takes its place also as a book definite in motive, justified by the unity of the matter, the responsibility of the purpose, and the fulness of preparation—the conscience and conviction need hardly be named; but *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* is, more than some of its followers, one book from beginning to end. It has the unity of abundant matter,—the unity, that is, which need not break boundaries although it stretches and enlarges them with fulness, but holds together, amply, easily, containing with patience the urgence of a throng of thoughts. And the subject has its own unity of time, inasmuch as the dominating centre of the book is the work of a certain half-century.

We shall find nothing more characteristic of Ruskin than this incident of the fifty years in question. Let me describe them, though roughly enough, to the reader, by means of Ruskin's own discovery that they were the years in which the stonemason, setting his work of Gothic tracery between man and the heavens, thought equally of the form of the light he revealed by his window and of the form of the stone whereby he revealed it. The eyes of that stonemason's father had been chiefly intent upon the opening, the star; the form of it had been in his fancy; and in the mental councils of invention the shape of this exterior light, as his work was about to define it, had been the president image. The son of that stonemason, on the other hand—the half-century being past—thought in the foremost place of the shape of his beautiful stone; beautiful it was, but not more beautiful than his whose fortune it was to live in the great half-century, and whose act it was to do the work that made the half-century great. This latter—the stone-sculptor of the fifty years here set in the midst—designing a star of sky and designing the starred stone with the dignity of equal invention, made the window that is manifestly the noblest. Ruskin, with singular sight and singular insight, perceives the manner, the cause, the past, the future, and the value of that window and gives it an historical place and sanction. There is no child that does not lie staring at the wall and fancying that a wall-paper design seems now to take the shape enclosed by lines and anon the shape of the intervals instead; and Ruskin's eye saw the tracery simply, impartially, and without preoccupation, like a child's and saw it with the mason's eye moreover, and with the discerning spirit of a master of theory. The reader might be tempted to urge this incident beyond its proper significance as an architectural or historical discovery but he can hardly be wrong in appreciating the passage for its authorship—authorship, that is, and all that it implies of character, nature, and special and manifold fitness for the work of the book.

To proceed to the expository task.

The Seven Lamps of Architecture are: The Lamp of Sacrifice; The Lamp of Truth; The Lamp of Power; The Lamp of Beauty; The Lamp of Life;

The Lamp of Memory; The Lamp of Obedience. On the cloth-cover of the original edition, designed by Ruskin after the arabesques of the pavement of San Miniato, above Florence—foliage, birds, and beasts arranged by counter-change—are embossed seven other words of kindred meaning: Religio; Observantia; Auctoritas; Fides; Obedientia; Memoria; Spiritus. The volume is divided into unequal chapters, headed with the English titles already stated. The first has in greatest measure the signs of the author's yet unmitigated youth. It is not so much the work of an untamed spirit as that of a spirit wearing certain bonds with all its will, a thousand times convinced, and that from the first infancy. There is the tone of a man troubled to convey his indignation by terms adequate, in the passage wherein he threatens the English nation with sensible visitation of divine wrath upon her honour, her commerce, and her arts as a retribution for the measure whereby a place in her legislature had been "impiously conceded to the Romanist." All this was not only disclaimed but unsaid in succeeding editions. Childhood with its passions—the polemic passion of a spiritual and intellectual home-boy is one of the most tumultuous of fresh passions—was still in a sense in Ruskin's heart during the writing of *The Seven Lamps.* In some things he made, as we shall hear him tell later in *Fors Clavigera*, a definite change; he, for one, could not live under the stress of doctrines that obliged and admitted of no transaction, and yet actually suffered daily transaction at the hands of their professors. He had thought every moment committed to crime that was not spent in rescuing men from eternal reprobation; the choice was now thrust upon him: should he devote his years and moments directly, theologically, and immediately, or should he mitigate his conviction of the instant stress of obligation? How he answered the question may be judged from the fact that he addressed himself to the mediate work of art.

"The Lamp of Sacrifice" needs not from a commentator to-day the definition that was due when *The Seven Lamps* was written. Manifestly, this author's works have both enriched the minds of Englishmen with ideas and have accustomed them to the apprehension of ideas. What he has thought and pronounced abides with us, as it were, both in mechanical suspension and in chemical solution. He has charged us with his teachings, and has modified our intelligence. Thus, many of his pages seem now to be over-anxiously expository that were not so when he composed them. In this matter he stands between the old age and the new. Briefly, he suggests in this chapter a delicate distinction between sacrifice and waste; between that work upon partially concealed ornament, which is the continuation of visible ornament, and thus justifies the surmise of the eye and keeps a promise, and work bestowed carelessly or with ignorance as to how to "make it tell," or with heartless contempt of the value of human effort. This last is the subject of a "nice balance." From art that is purely wasted on the one hand, and from art (or art so-called) that is purely exhibitory, on the other, the right spirit of sacrifice is absent. Hard work is approved—"all old work nearly has been hard work."

As usual, the examples are exceedingly interesting. We are taught to respect the economy of the bas-reliefs of San Zeno at Verona, with their rich work well in sight, and the simplicity of the still lovely work of the arcade above, the various distances being treated not by a difference in degree of beauty in decoration, but by a difference in the quality of design. And so forth with a series of instances that yield all their significance to the sight and insight of Ruskin's intellectual eyes. It follows from this doctrine of sacrifice that rich ornament (the natural flower of Gothic) is praised with an ardour by which a reader to-day may be slow to be enkindled; he has, without intending it, perhaps gradually grown to love simplicity, albeit conscious that it is vulgar ornament and not fine that has made plain masonry to seem so attractive. But under Ruskin's teaching this tendency must be corrected, and in fact sacrificed. Many a modern man finds a charm in a blank strong wall that he knows is more than any negative merit ought to have for him. Such simplicities, he has to learn,

> "Are but the rests and monotones of the art; it is to its far happier, far higher, exultation that we owe those fair fronts of variegated mosaic, charged with wild fancies and dark hosts of imagery, thicker and quainter than ever filled the depth of midsummer dream; those vaulted gates, trellised with close leaves; these window-labyrinths of twisted tracery and starry light; those misty masses of multitudinous pinnacle

> and diademed tower; the only witnesses, perhaps, that remain to us of the faith and fear of nations. All else for which the builders sacrificed has passed away—all their living interest, and aims, and achievements. We know not for what they laboured, and we see no evidence of their reward. Victory, wealth, authority, happiness—all have departed, though bought by many a bitter sacrifice. But of them, and their life and their toil upon the earth, one reward, one evidence, is left to us in those grey heaps of deep-wrought stone. They have taken with them to the grave their powers, their honours, and their errors; but they have left us their adoration."

This splendid passage is itself a Gothic architecture of style. It closes the section of "The Lamp of Sacrifice." The second chapter opens with a page of even higher beauty, in honour of the authority of Truth, the terrible virtue that has no borderland (so Ruskin was doubtless taught in his childhood; and so he teaches with his manly voice, thunderous). But who that has dealt, unprejudiced, with the common matters of the conscience will be able to cry assent to such a doctrine? Can the angler who deceives a fish, or the physician who deceives a lunatic, dare to aver with Ruskin that "Truth regards with the same severity the lightest and the boldest violations of its law"; that it is the one quality "of which there are no degrees"; that whereas "there are some faults slight in the sight of love, some errors slight in the estimate of wisdom, truth forgives no insult, and endures no stain"? Assuredly by no such rhetoric is this one virtue to be separated from the rest—her proper company—who share with her their own inevitable difficulty and doubt. But it is not to be wondered at that having said so much Ruskin should find it necessary to reassure his readers against any possible scruple as to the lawfulness of making art look like nature. This, however, as a scruple of the moral conscience, need not detain us. Incidentally to the same subject he does not abate of his estimate of England as "a nation distinguished for its general uprightness and faith," although the English "admit into their architecture more of prudence, concealment, and deceit than any other [people] of this or of past time." Much more significance, by the way, had on a former page been attributed to the poor "exhibitory" shams of the modern Italians; the English fault is arbitrarily treated as an inconsistency, the Italian, equally arbitrarily, as a consistency quick with essential implications. Quite removed from these provocations to controversy, and easily detachable from the ethical question so insistently discussed, is a passage of characteristic beauty descriptive of the imaginative illusion of the cupola of Parma, where Correggio has made a space of some thirty feet diameter "look like a cloud-wrapt opening in the seventh heaven, crowded with a rushing sea of angels." Ruskin mitigated his admiration of Correggio in after years. A little later comes the page on tracery, on one salient passage whereof I have already dwelt; and here is another exquisite example of this incomparably sensitive perception. The tracery of the later French Gothic window had grown exceedingly delicate; severe and pure it was still, nevertheless, and the material manifestly stiff. Yet —

> "At the close of the period of pause, the first sign of serious change was like a low breeze, passing through the emaciated tracery, and making it tremble. It began to undulate like the threads of a cobweb lifted by the wind. It lost its essence as a structure of stone. . . . The architect was pleased with this new fancy. . . . In a little time the bars of tracery were caused to appear to the eye as if they had been woven together like a net."

Of chief importance in the chapter dedicated to "The Lamp of Power" is Ruskin's teaching upon the value and weight of shadows. He bids the young architect learn the habit of thinking in shadow: "Let him design with the sense of heat and cold upon him; let him cut out the shadows, as men dig wells in unwatered plains." Let him see that the light "is bold enough not to be dried up by twilight," and the shadow "deep enough not to be dried like a shallow pool by a noon-day sun." Magnificent image! Another example of power, intellectually apprehended with a historian's philosophy, is in Ruskin's study of that Gothic of rejection, the Venetian, which began in the luxuriance wherein other architectures have expired, which laid aside Byzantine ornaments one by one, fixed its own forms "by laws more and more severe," and "stood forth, at last, a model of domestic Gothic, so grand, so complete, so nobly systematised, that, to my mind, there never existed an architecture with so stern a claim to our reverence." This judgment also was partly renounced afterwards in favour of early Lombard work.

Two distinct characters in architecture had been treated in the earlier chapters (with what complex consistency of teaching, what abundance of thought, and what experimental examples, this mere indication of the subject and direction of the work does not pretend to express): the one, the impression architecture receives from human power; the other, the image it bears of the natural creation. And it is this likeness to the "natural creation" that is the subject of the fourth chapter, "The Lamp of Beauty." The sanction of all the beauty of art, its authority, its appeal, its origin, its paragon, abide, as all readers of Ruskin have been told by him in a hundred places, in natural fact. "Beyond a certain point, and that a very low one, man cannot advance in the invention of beauty, without directly imitating natural form." Furthermore, the frequency of a form in nature is, in a sense carefully understood, the measure of its beauty. In other words, that which is, in its order and place, frequent, easily visible, very manifest, not subject to the concealing counsels of nature in organic and inorganic depths—caverns or living anatomy—*that* is most natural and most beautiful, and the model of decorative art. "By frequency I mean that limited and isolated frequency which is characteristic of all perfection . . . as a rose is a common flower, but yet there are not so many roses on a tree as there are leaves." Throughout the argument the teacher has searched out his way sometimes by quick, sometimes by hard, thinking: but never in haste, and never suppressing any part or step of the sincere processes of thought. And immediately upon this eager but steady inquiry into the sanction of artistic beauty comes the passage that surprised the world, in condemnation of the Greek fret; and with it one of those keen discoveries that make Ruskin's research so brilliant—the discovery that there *is* a likeness to natural form in the fret, for it is an image of the crystals of bismuth; but that this crystallisation is seldom visible, little known, and not even perfectly natural, inasmuch it is brought to pass by artificial means, the mental being seldom or never found in pure condition. But the crystals of salt have a form known to almost every man, and it is the crytallisation of common salt that sets the example of another design in right lines used throughout the Lombard churches and drawn with extraordinary beauty by the author, rich with shadow. As a result of the same kind of casuistic insight (I put the word casuistic to its right use) Ruskin condemns the portcullis and all heraldic decoration—especially when, as usual, it is repeated. The arms are an announcement, and have their place, but what they have to tell it is an impertinence to tell a score of times. Nor is a motto decorative, "since, of all things unlike nature, the forms of letters are perhaps the most so." With the same sincere ingenuity (here quite unstrained) he explains the vileness of the ribbon and its unlikeness to grass and sea-weed with their anatomy, gradation, direction, and allotted size of separate creatures. The ribbon has "no strength, no languor. It cannot wave, in the true sense, but only flutter; it cannot bend, but only turn and be wrinkled." We are urged to condemn the ribbons of Raphael, and do so heartily, even the ribbons that tie "Ghiberti's glorious bronze flowers," and all the multitudes of scrolls in so far as they are used for decoration. Let me add this exquisite phrase (from a somewhat paradoxical passage) in description of that Mediæval treatment of drapery which began to restore, while it altered, the Antique buoyancy: "The motion of the figure only bent into a softer line the stillness of the falling veil, followed by it like a slow cloud by drooping rain: only in links of lighter undulation it followed the dances of the angels."

The warning against false decorations is necessarily a warning also against decoration misplaced. It was spoken in 1849. Fifty years later and more, the world has become full of violations. Nothing spoken by this voice, which spoke after close thought and with singular authority, has been disobeyed with a more general and more national consent. Ruskin pronounced the law that "things belonging to purposes of active and occupied life" should not be decorated. The answer of the public is the Greek moulding on shop-fronts, the decoration of the temple multiplied in the railway-station, on the counter, in the office; until for disgust we no longer see it, and are but aware of some superfluity that is depressing, degraded, vulgar, dishonouring, and tedious—we care not what. The country has treated with practical contempt the humorous and generous instructor who in his youth would have much enjoyed "going through the streets of London, pulling down these brackets and friezes and large names, restoring to the tradesmen the capital they had spent in architecture, and putting them on honest and equal terms, each with his name in black letters over his door."

Symmetry, proportion, and colour form the subjects of important passages in "The Lamp of Beauty." Vertical equality, against which a young architect ought to be warned in his elementary lesson, Ruskin found to be usual in Modern Gothic; it has not become less so in Gothic more modern still. He would have symmetry to belong to horizontal, and proportion to vertical, division; symmetry being obviously connected with the idea of balance, which is only lateral. Colour on a building should be that of an organised creature, and the colours of an organised creature are visibly independent (this word must serve for lack of a better) of the form of its limbs. It is arbitrary, and has a plan of its own—the plan of colour. Ruskin would not have us give to separate mouldings separate colours, nor even to leaves or figures one colour and to the ground another. And in general "the best place for colour is on broad surfaces, not on spots of interest in form." When the colouring is brought to pass by the natural hue of blocks of marble, the chequers are not to be harmonised or fitted to the forms of the windows. As in the Doge's Palace, the front should look as if the surface had first been finished, and the windows then cut out of it. This rule of beauty is distinctly also a rule of power. It is, needless to say, a point of architectural controversy, and the doctrine of Ruskin on colour has been held in horror. He has on his side the Byzantine builders with their perdurable colouring by incrustation, and against him Antiquity and most of the northern Gothic schools. Then follows the page on Giotto's tower, model of proportion, design, and colour, "coloured like a morning cloud and chased like a sea shell":

> "And if this be, as I believe it, the model and mirror of perfect architecture, is there not something to be learned by looking back to the early life of him who raised it? I said that the power of human mind had its growth in the Wilderness; much more must the love and the conception of that beauty whose every line and hue we have seen to be, at the least, a faded image of God's daily work, and an arrested ray of some star of creation, be given chiefly in the places which He has gladdened by planting the fir tree and the pine. Not within the walls of Florence, but among the far away fields of her lilies, was the child trained who was to raise the headstone of Beauty above her towers of watch and war. Remember all that he became; count the sacred thoughts with which he filled the heart of Italy; ask those who followed him what they learned at his feet; and when you have numbered his labours, and received their testimony, if it seem to you that God had verily poured out upon this His servant no common nor restrained portion of His Spirit, and that he was indeed a King among the children of men, remember also that the legend upon his crown was that of David's: 'I took thee from the sheep-cote, and from following the sheep.'"

" No inconsiderable part of the essential character of Beauty depends on the expression of vital energy in organic things, or on the subjection to such energy of things naturally passive and powerless." This is amongst the opening sentences of " The Lamp of Life," and the theme is rich in the hands of the most vital of writers. Even readers in whose ears this eloquence is too much inflected, too full of wave, too much moved in its beauty to be a perfect style, must confess a vitality that makes the vivacity of other authors seem but a trivial agitation. Ruskin always carried that rich internal burden, a vast capacity of sincerity. Others may have been entirely sincere; and he could be no more than entirely sincere. And yet what a difference in the degree of integrity ! And the measure of this capacity for truth is the measure of vitality. It is by force of life that Ruskin hoped, in these early works of his, and by force of life that he so despaired in the later works as almost to persuade himself, for very grief, that he cared no longer for the miseries of cities, but was glad to enjoy his days in peace.

The passage on dead architecture is an example of the profound misgiving that has beset all prophets, a distrust of the world and of its final work ; it is also a passage of literature that has cost much. Among corrupted styles Ruskin has tolerance of that which is animated and unafraid—the Flamboyant design of France. And—because the question of life is locked (when the sculpture is that of natural form) in the question of finish, the student should consult these sayings: "Sculpture is not the mere cutting of the form of anything in stone; it is the cutting of the effect of it. The sculptor must paint with his chisel; half his touches are not to realise, but to put power into, the form." "The Lamp of Life," with its several arguments and its essential significance, is a solemn chapter appealing directly to the obligations of immortal man; "The Lamp of Memory," a most delicate one, in which the author is all but compelled to say somewhat more than he could stand to, and yet unsays no more than a note will answer. Except the page in which he had bidden men to refrain from decorating a railway station (a page that filled the artistic public with an incredulous surprise, wherefrom they have hardly yet recovered, though, to do them justice, it did not cause them to pause in any cast-iron work they might have been about), perhaps nothing in *The Seven Lamps* has been found so memorable by the greater number of readers as the passage that declares Ruskin's lack of delight in an Alpine landscape transposed in fancy to the western hemisphere. "The flowers in an instant lost their light, the river its music." "Yet not *all* their light, nor *all* its music," says the note. What then? Never was a thought more certainly doubtful, double, deniable, undeniable. Ruskin's description of that landscape—a description which, of course, depends for its cogency in the argument upon the fact that it takes no note of the historical interest of the Alps—is a finished work, exquisite with study of leaf and language, but yet not effective in proportion to its own beauty and truth. Ruskin wrote it in youth, in the impulse of his own discovery of language, and of all that English in its rich modern freshness could do under his mastery—and it is too much, too charged, too anxious. Some sixty lines of "word-painting" are here; and they are less than this line of a poet:

> "Sunny eve in some forgotten place."

This refraining phrase is of more avail to the imagination than the splendid subalpine landscape of *The Seven Lamps*. Another page of this chapter has also become famous—that which begins, "Do not let us talk then of Restoration. The thing is a lie from beginning to end." The last lamp is that of Obedience. (Many years later, in *Fors Clavigera*, Ruskin confesses that he had much ado to keep the Lamps to seven, they would so easily become eight or nine on his hands.) It contains, among much fruit of thought, the author's definite counsel to the world as to the choice among the logical and mature styles of European architecture. He forbids any infantine or any barbarous style, "however Herculean their infancy, or majestic their outlawry, such as our own Norman, or the Lombard Romanesque." Of the four that are to choose from—the Pisan Romanesque, the early Gothic of the Western Italian Republics, the Venetian Gothic, and the English earliest decorated—the architect is urged to learn the laws so surely that he may finally win the right of exercising his own liberty and invention. And a manifold meditation on obedience closes with another recollection of early religious menace and expectation:

> "I have paused, not once or twice, as I wrote, and often have checked the course of what might otherwise have been importunate persuasion, as the thought has crossed me, how soon all Architecture may be vain, except that which is not made with hands. There is something ominous in the light which has enabled us to look back with disdain upon the ages among whose lovely vestiges we have been wandering. I could smile when I hear the hopeful exultation of many, at the new reach of worldly science, and vigour of worldly effort; as if we were again at the beginning of days. There is thunder on the horizon as well as dawn. The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered Zoar."

A reader with the world-pitying heart of the world of our later day is dismayed at the severity and at the calm of this universal threat. The visionary beauty of the phrase has none of that grief which is heard in the vaticination of another prophetic author, Coventry Patmore, who yet menaced not the whole world but one degenerate land, foretelling the day when —

> "A dim heroic nation, long since dead,
> The foulness of her agony forgot"—

England shall be remembered only by her then dead language—"the bird-voice and the blast of her omniloquent tongue."

CHAPTER VII

"THE STONES OF VENICE" (1851–1853)

Ruskin, penetrated with a sense of the "baseness of the schools of architecture and nearly every other art, which have for three centuries been predominant in Europe," wrote this book principally in order to convict those base schools, locally, in their central degradation. Locally, because in Venice, and in Venice only, could the Renaissance be effectually reached, judged, and sentenced. "Destroy its claims to admiration there" (when Ruskin began his work they were triumphant) "and it can assert them nowhere else." He intended to make the Stones of Venice touchstones, and to detect, "by the mouldering of her marble, poison more subtle than ever was betrayed by the rending of her crystal." And beyond this—one of the most interesting and definite motives that ever urged the making of a book—stands the inevitable argument of his life: "Men are intended, without excessive difficulty . . . to know good things from bad."

The work is thus local because the "festering lily" of Shakespeare had its unique foulness in Venice. That city had been in an early age of her long history the central meeting-place of the Lombard from the north and the Arab from the south over the wreck of the Roman empire. It was through this fruitful encounter that the Ducal Palace became "the central building of the world." All European architecture derives from Greece, through Rome, and the conditions of place and of race bring to pass the all-unique variety of derivation. In Venice the variety was also all-important; and Ruskin begins the study of the art in its rise, greatness, decline, and last corruption, by a brief but large history of this nation, standing, as a sea-nation, a ruin between Tyre (no more than a memory) and England still imperial. He divides the national life of Venice, between the nine hundred years from her foundation (421 A. D.) and the five hundred years of her decline and fall, by the measure called the Serrar del Consiglio, which finally and fatally distinguished the nobles from the commonalty, and withdrew the power from the people and the Doge alike. "Ah, well done, Venice! Wisdom this, indeed!" had been Ruskin's note to Sansovino's summary of the constitution of Venice *before* the Serrar del Consiglio: "She found means to commit the government not to one, not to few, not to many, but to the many good, to the few better, and to the best one." Ruskin places the beginning of the decline in 1418; so that even her religious painters came later, and her great school about a century later, more or less. The sensitive arts of architecture and sculpture seem to have taken the mortal hurt more quickly than the art of painting, incorrupt in Venice later than elsewhere by reason of the life of its incomparable colour. In the introductory chapter,

L. of C.

"The Quarry," Ruskin gives us that instance of the tombs of the two Doges which is an example of the great essential contention of the book. The one tomb, not primitive, not altogether fine, an early fifteenth-century work, has a nobility yet unforegone; the other, half a century later, is the tomb of Andrea Vendramin, the most costly ever bestowed on a Venetian monarch, praised by popular taste and authoritative criticism with all their superlatives, while the other was contemned. Climbing to see more of this later effigy, which he perceived to be ignoble, Ruskin found that the much vaunted sculptured hand, in sight, had no fellow but a block, and so with the aged brow, wrinkled only where it might be seen, the aged cheek, smooth, and also distorted, where it lay out of sight. Ruskin would have had nothing but praise for treatment of sculpture according to the position of the effigy; but this was another matter:

> "Who, with a heart in his breast, could have stayed his hand, as he reached the bend of the grey forehead, and measured out the last veins of it as so much the zecchin?"

It was not necessary that Ruskin should follow up this sculptor and find him condemned for forgery; his own sentence strikes close enough.

The lesson on architecture that follows is offered to a reader who is to be taught to build and to decorate, and who, in order thereto, is to be set free from the poor fiction—is it even so much? has it life enough for feigning?—that the decorations of the modern world are delightful to man. "Do you seriously imagine," asks our teacher, "that any living soul in London likes triglyphs? . . . Greeks did: English people never did, and never will."

> "The first thing we have to ask of decoration is that it should indicate strong liking. . . . The old Lombard architects liked hunting: so they covered their work with horses and hounds. . . . The base Renaissance architects liked masquing and fiddling; so they covered their work with comic masks and musical instruments. Even that was better than our English way of liking nothing and professing to like triglyphs."

Ruskin calls upon us for deliberate question and upright answer as to our affections.

But first comes the long historical lesson on construction: on the wall, which is so built that it is not "dead wall"; on the pier, the base, the shaft, with a special emphasis upon the transition from the actual to the apparent cluster, illustrated by plans; on arch masonry, the arch load, the roof, and the buttress. Of all this, obviously, no indication in this summary is possible. The introductory lesson on decoration is another version of the often-repeated teaching on natural form:

> "All the lovely forms of the universe . . . whence to choose, and all the lovely lines that bound their substance or guide their motion. . . . There is material enough in a single flower for the ornament of a score of cathedrals: but suppose we were satisfied with less exhaustive appliance, and built

a score of cathedrals each to illustrate a single flower? that would be better than trying to invent new styles, I think. There is quite difference of style enough, between a violet and a hare-bell, for all reasonable purposes."

Who can read such a passage and not have gained a new felicity? We owe the exquisite thought and phrase (at least in regard to its occasion) to that folly of the time wherein the book was written—the hope that a new kind of architecture was to come to pass through the initiative of the Crystal Palace. John Ruskin consents to pause and refute that idle boast. "The earth hath bubbles as the water hath," he says of the Sydenham "palace," "and this is of them." To return to this inexhaustible theme of the natural form; Ruskin opposes Garnett, a writer who commends art (as writers on art have done at least every ten years since then) for its correction of nature. Art, according to Garnett, is to criticise nature by her own rules gathered from all her works, and he quotes the saying recorded of Raphael, "that the artist's object was to make things not as nature made them but as nature would make them." Ruskin replies:

"I had thought that, by this time, we had done with that stale . . . and misunderstood saying. . . . Raffaelle was a painter of humanity, and assuredly there is something the matter with humanity, a few *dovrebbe's* more or less, wanting in it. We have most of us heard of original sin, and may perhaps, in our modest moments, conjecture that we are not quite what God, or Nature, would have us to be. Raffaelle *had* something to mend in humanity: I should have liked to have seen him mending a daisy, or a pease-blossom, or a moth."

Then follows a page on the succession of the waves of the irregular sea. Not one of these hits "the great ideal shape," the corrected shape, nor will if we watch them for a thousand years.

In the appendix to the first volume we may read much theology of Ruskin's own writing and of his father's, directed against the idea of a teaching Church, and showing him to be so docile a son as to follow his father not only in regard to "eternal interests" but also in regard to temporal prosperity. If you care little for the first, says the elder Ruskin in effect, you must needs care for the second, and Protestantism means the wealth of nations. Not many years later, when he wrote *Unto this Last*, John Ruskin had thought his own thoughts on the wealth of nations, and his father was amongst the dismayed readers. A more valuable page of the appendix is that which declares the rapid judgment to which Ruskin intends by *Stones of Venice* to train the reader —or rather for which he intends to set the reader free —to be attainable in painting as well as in architecture. We ought by a side-glance, as we walk down a gallery, to tell a good painting; because, as in architecture structure and expression are united, so in painting are execution and expression. Who will say, after this, that Ruskin sought too much for symbolism and allusion and the less pictorial characters of art? "The business of a painter is to paint." He gave years of his life to Veronese, in whom the emotions were altogether subordinate. In fact Ruskin is the most liberal and universal of all lovers and critics of art, having eyes for all manners as for all matters:

> "A man long trained to love the monk's visions of Angelico turns in proud and ineffable disgust from the first work of Rubens . . . he encounters across the Alps. . . . He has forgotten that while Angelico prayed and wept . . . there was different work doing in the dank fields of Flanders;—wild seas to be banked out; . . . hard ploughing and harrowing of the frosty clay; careful breeding of stout horses and fat cattle, . . . rough affections and sluggish imaginations, fleshy, substantial, iron-shod humanities. . . . And are we to suppose there is no nobility in Rubens? masculine and universal sympathy with all this? . . . On the other hand, a man trained . . . in our Sir Joshua school, will not and cannot allow that there is any art at all in the technical work of Angelico. . . . We have been taught in England to think there can be no virtue but in a loaded brush and rapid hand; but . . . there is art also in the delicate point and in the hand which trembles as it moves, not because it is more liable to err but because there is more danger in its error."

In the second volume the study of St. Mark's is prefaced by that of the churches of Torcello and of Murano, those ancient villages whence in part Venice received her people. It is in the marble-mosaic Murano pavement of 1140—"one of the most precious monuments in Italy"—that the eye which replied with the splendour of its gift of vision to the splendour of the Venetian brush discovered the first Venetian colour. As to Byzantine building Ruskin teaches us the importance of this fact—that it is a style of "confessed incrustation," and shows us how far this fact carries. Venice on her islands, hard by a sandy and marshy coast, and in traffic with the East, built with the meaner materials and faced them with the marbles of her commerce. Her coloured architecture became rather flat, rather small, as well as precious, carrying porphyry, alabaster, and gold, and later the less perdurable but more precious colours of her painters. Incrustation is obviously "the only permanent chromatic decoration possible," as we know who trace with mixed feelings the vestiges of the Gothic painter at Bourges and at Winchester, in chocolate and green. Here, at St. Mark's, is no opaque surface-painting of the painter's mixing, but the colour of nature in jasper and marble, into which the light makes some way: "marbles that half refuse and half yield to the sunshine, Cleopatra-like, their 'bluest veins to kiss.'" Certain characters of construction and of decoration are implied by incrustation: for example, the delicacy that is to distinguish the plinths and cornices used for binding this rich armature from those that are essential parts of the solid building; the abandonment of nearly all expression in the body of the building, except that of strength, so that the Byzantine building shows no anxiety to disturb open surfaces; the solidity of the shafts, however precious in material, as an instinctive amends for the thinness of the precious surface on the walls; and the consequent variable size of the shafts, as rubies in a carcanet have the differences proper to their single values, and the emeralds of two ear-rings are not absolutely alike; shallow cutting of the decoration, so that here are none of the hollows and hiding-places proper to the stone-work of the north. On this serene and sunny construction the decorator worked as one who traces a fine drawing, subduing and controlling figure and drapery to the surface of his film of marble. Little have they read this book who currently discuss the fanaticism of Ruskin in the matter of "truth," and charge him with so bigoted a love of integrity as to forbid the use of a marble surface on a construction of commoner substance; an architect accuses him of this to-day as easily as a painter to-morrow will aver that Ruskin did not permit him to choose what he would record, but compelled him to record all that was before him. It is as the chief of the lovers of colour that Ruskin is the apologist of an incrusted church simply condemned as "ugly" by the taste of the guides of the world—that St. Mark's which was to him "a confusion of delight," a "chain of language and life," that St. Mark's which he read, not in Gothic darkness and effort, but clearly, with the clearness of white dome and sky. No sign of carelessness of heart, to him, was the colour of Venice, but a solemn investiture. As to the form, I may do no more here than record the little spray of leaves he draws on a page of *Stones of Venice*, with a subtle difference in the progression of the proportions amongst the seven leaves; and when you are penetrated with the grace of these single things in their inter-relation, you read that these are the proportions of the façade of St. Mark's. Who but he has given a reader such a happy moment? And as for the Byzantine spirit, he cries, of St. Mark's, "No city had such a Bible." He perceives in it

> "That mighty humanity, so perfect and so proud, that hides no weakness beneath the mantle, and gains no greatness from the diadem; the majesty of thoughtful form, on which the dust of gold and flame of jewels are dashed, as the sea-spray upon the rock, and still the great Manhood seems to stand bare against the sky."

The following section, on the nature of Gothic, is one of the most important chapters of Ruskin's architectural work.

Let it be remembered that he chose the Gothic of Venice for the sake of its local succession to this local Byzantine work. But he prefaces the lesson with a study of *universal* Gothic,—the Gothic of such almost abstract quality as would be difficult to define, even as red would be difficult to describe to one who had not seen it, but who must be told that it was the colour mingled with blue to make this violet, and with yellow to make yonder orange. Universal Gothic, like other great architecture, began with artless utterance.

> "It is impossible to calculate the enormous loss of power in modern days owing to the imperative requirement that art shall be methodical and learned."

For there will always be "more intellect than there can be education." But Gothic was in a special manner the work of the savage intellect, of the inventor, the intellectual workman; it has not the same word to repeat, but the perpetual novelty of life. And, to the Gothic workman, living foliage—no longer the mere "explanatory accessory" of Lombardic or Romanesque sculpture—became "a subject of intense affection." Here is an incomparable Ruskin thought: the love of change, he tells us, that was in the character of the Gothic sculptor, restless in following the hunt or the battle, "is at once soothed and satisfied as it watches the wandering of the tendril, and the budding of the flower." And here a Ruskin phrase, also in its place incomparable: "Greek and Egyptian ornament is either mere surface engraving . . . or its lines are flowing, lithe, and luxuriant. . . . But the Gothic ornament stands out in prickly independence, and frosty fortitude, jutting into crockets, and freezing into pinnacles." In the same chapter is, amongst others, an admirable page upon redundance as a quality, not, needless to say, of all fine Gothic, but of the Gothic that is most full of all Gothic qualities, and especially the Gothic quality of humility: "That humility which is the very life of the Gothic school is shown not only in the imperfection, but in the accumulation, of ornament."

With the selfsame care are the many Gothic constructions of Venice discovered by Ruskin's research as the few Byzantine; nearly all, except the Ducal Palace, suffer from "the continual juxtaposition of the

Renaissance palaces; . . . they exhaust their own life by breathing it into the Renaissance coldness." The Ducal Palace, according to Ruskin, was a work of sudden Gothic. It is unlike the true transitional work done between the final cessation of pure Byzantine building, about 1300, and its own date—1320 to 1350. The struggle between Byzantine and Gothic (formed on the mainland) had been one of equals, equally organised and vital. Ruskin shows us the brilliant contest, with here and there a bit of true Gothic tangled and taken prisoner till its friends should come up and sustain it. And of the Gothic victory the English reader (Ruskin writes, in spite of all, for the ultra-English reader, the insular, the suburban, the very churchwarden) should note that the Venetian houses were the refined and ornate dwellings of "a nation as laborious, as practical, as brave, and as prudent as ourselves. . . . At Venice, . . . Vicenza, Padua, and Verona the traveller may ascertain, by actual experience, the effect which would be produced upon the comfort and luxury of daily life by the revival of Gothic architecture"; he may see the unruined traceries against the summer sky, or "may close the casements fitted to their unshaken shafts against such wintry winds as would have made an English house vibrate to its foundations." "I trust," said Ruskin, and his lesson has in part been learnt since then, "that there will come a time when the English people may see the folly of building basely and insecurely." The reader is led then at last to the Ducal Palace, and, in honour of its sculptures, to a chapter on that great book of the Virtues as the Christian Venice honoured them; from that chapter I must save this sentence on Plato—that the "moral virtues may be found in his writings defined in the most noble manner, as a great painter defines his figures, *without outlines*."

When Gothic architecture came to the conquest of Byzantine in Venice, both were noble; but when, in a later age, the Renaissance architecture attacked the Gothic, neither was purely noble. Ruskin shows us that "unless luxury had enervated and subtlety falsified the Gothic forms, Roman traditions could not have prevailed against them." The corrupt Gothic had become luxurious; "in some of the best Gothic . . . there is hardly an inch of stone left unsculptured"; but the decadent Gothic is at once extravagant and jaded. Against this degraded architecture "came the Renaissance armies; and their first assault was in the requirement of universal perfection." The Renaissance workmen lost originality of thought and tenderness of feeling, for the sake of their dexterity of touch and accuracy of knowledge.

> "The thought and the feeling which they despised departed from them, and they were left to felicitate themselves on their small science and their neat fingering. This is the history of the first attack of the Renaissance upon the Gothic schools. . . . Now do not let me be misunderstood when I speak generally of the evil spirit of the Renaissance. The reader . . . will not find one word but of the most profound reverence for those mighty men who

could wear the Renaissance armour of proof, and yet not feel it encumber their living limbs—Leonardo and Michael Angelo, Ghirlandajo and Masaccio, Titian and Tintoret. But I speak of the Renaissance as an evil time, because, when it saw those men go burning forth into the battle, it mistook their armour for their strength; and forthwith encumbered with the painful panoply every stripling who ought to have gone forth only with his own choice of three smooth stones out of the brook."

Full of significance (I must take but one detail from this history of decline) is the fact that even in the finest examples of early Renaissance, where it was mingled with reminiscences of the Byzantine chromatic work, the coloured marble was no longer a simple part of the masonry but was framed and represented as hanging by ribbons. Of the central architecture of the Renaissance, the Casa Grimani stands, in Ruskin's noble praises, as the best example. With the Vicenza Town Hall, with St. Peter's, Whitehall, and St. Paul's, this palace represents the building that has been set before the student, from the date of its invention to the day of the writing of the *Stones of Venice*, as the antagonist of the barbarous genius. None the less was it a sign of the general withdrawal of architecture into "earthliness, out of all that was warm and heavenly." In its central works the Venetian Renaissance set up statues of the ancient Venetian virtues Temperance and Justice; but these figures were furnished—as neither the left hand of the one nor the right hand of the other could be seen from below—with one hand each.

> "Its dragons are covered with marvellous scales, but have no terror or sting in them; its birds are perfect in plumage, but have no song in them; its children are lovely of limb, but have no childishness in them."

The effigies upon its tombs evaded the thought of death; its figure of the dead first indented the pillow "naturally," then rose on its elbow and looked about it, and finally stepped out of the tomb for public applause, not with virtues, but with fame and victory, for companions. Ruskin takes us, through the stages of corruption, to the curtains and ropes, fringes, tassels, cherubs, the impotence of expression, the passionless folly, of the seventeenth century, more foul in Venice than elsewhere as the thing corrupted had been the best. Infidelity, Pride of State, Pride of System (or the confidence of definitely observable laws that never enabled man to do a great thing, and albeit literature and painting could break through, architecture could not)—these were the causes of the derogation of Venice. The rod had blossomed, pride had budded, violence had risen up. The chapter following this on the Roman Renaissance deals with the Grotesque of the Renaissance; it shows us the mocking head—inhuman, weak, and finely finished, carved upon the base of the tower of Santa Maria Formosa, one of many hundreds to be found upon the later buildings. As the grotesque was, to Ruskin's mind, at its noblest in Dante (yet heaven help us, wretched race of man, if Dante's laugh is to be our mirth!) so it was at its thinnest and most malicious in Renaissance ornament in Venice. That ornament closes the architecture of Europe.

But the conclusion of this great book is an appeal not to despair, but to the hope of the race. It is a race still in its infancy, says John Ruskin, if we may take as tokens of puerility its foolish condemnation of the only work of art (Turner's) that was true to the science and truth professed by the age; its misunderstanding of social and economic principles, so that it preached those impossibilities "liberty" and "equality," and yet in no single nation dared to shut up its custom-houses; its profession of charity and self-sacrifice for the practice of individual man and its rejection thereof for the practice of the State. If mankind, then, was childish, it might be taught. And how much, in by-ways of opinion, the world did learn from Ruskin, of true learning, may be seen from an incident of this last chapter, in which he rebukes the painters of his day for painting Italy without olive-trees! This they did because their teachers thought trees ought not to be known from one another, and you certainly cannot make olives like any other tree of the hillside. "The very school which carries its science in the representation of man down to the dissection of the most minute muscle, refuses so much science to the drawing of a tree as shall distinguish one species from another." Then follows a magnificent apology for the barbaric olive as the dome of St. Mark's has it, and this allusion to the trees of the painters:

> "A few strokes of the pencil, or dashes of colour, will be enough to enable the imagination to conceive a tree; and in those dashes of colour Sir Joshua Reynolds would have rested, and would have suffered the imagination to paint what more it liked for itself, and grow oaks, or olives, or apples, out of the few dashes of colour at its leisure. On the other hand, Hobbema, one of the worst of the realists, smites the imagination on the mouth, and bids it be silent, while he sets to work to paint his oak of the right green."

The painters of to-day, worthy the name, paint olives, and the world has been changed in other ways; but it has not begun to restore a great time.

For to the book, in so far as it is a book of persuasion, there is this reply, and against it this contention: that it persuades to that whereto no man nor men can attain by any means they can be persuaded to lay hands upon. The German painters, for example, of the Overbeck school had doubtless a good will to paint as they should, and as Ruskin's teaching would approve. But here is what he very rightly thought of them:

> "I know not anything more melancholy than the sight of the German cartoon, with its objective side and its subjective side; and mythological division and symbolical division; its allegorical sense and literal sense; and ideal point of view and intellectual point of view; its heroism of well-made armour and knitted brows . . .; and twenty innocent dashes of the hand of one God-made painter, poor old Bassano or Bonifazio, were worth it all, and worth it ten thousand times over."

Whereto, then, is the persuasion of this book directed? As a book of history and of meditation on character and art it does its work; but does it not itself show us that as a book of persuasion it can do no work, for there is no work to be done? Is a man to be persuaded, convinced, or converted to be such a man as this of Ruskin's description?

> "It is no more art to lay on colour delicately than to lay on acid [the acid of the photographer is meant] delicately. It is no more art to use the cornea and retina for the reception of an image than to use a lens and a piece of silvered paper. But the moment that inner part of the man, or rather that entire and only being of the man, of which cornea and retina, fingers and hands, pencils and colours, are all the mere servants and instruments; that manhood has light in itself, though the eyeball be sightless, and can gain in strength when the hand and the foot are hewn off and cast into the fire; the moment this part of the man stands forth with its solemn 'Behold, it is I,' then the work becomes art indeed."

In the preface to the third edition (1874) Ruskin confesses that his book had gained an influence, for Englishmen had begun to mottle their manufactory chimneys with black and red, and to adorn their banks and drapers' shops with Venetian tracery, but the chief purpose of the writing, which was to show the moral corruption as cause of the corruption of art, had been altogether neglected.

> "As a physician would . . . rather hear that his patient had thrown all his medicine out of the

window, than that he had sent word to his apothecary to leave out two of its three ingredients, so I would rather, for my own part, that no architects had ever condescended to adopt one of the views suggested in this book."

At the close of *Stones of Venice* he complains once more that all readers praised the style and none the substance.

"If . . . I had told, as a more egoistic person would, my own impressions, as thinking those, forsooth, and not the history of Venice, the most important business, . . . a large number of equally egoistic persons would have instantly felt the sincerity of the selfishness, clapped it, and stroked it, and said, 'That's me.'"

The truth he had to tell he declares to have been "denied and detested."

Finally, a somewhat whimsical last page is filled with an extract from his diary of 1845, showing that he too could write like a critic of "chiaroscuro and other artistic qualities," but that he kept such observations for the furnishing of his own science rather than for presentation to the public. And in the appendix to *Stones of Venice* is an invaluable essay on the Venetian pictures.

CHAPTER VIII

"PRE-RAPHAELITISM" (1851)

When the pictures of the young "pre-Raphaelite brethren" first appeared in the London exhibitions, the newspapers made loud complaints. Of pictures by Millais and Holman Hunt at the Academy the *Times* said: "These young artists have unfortunately become notorious by addicting themselves to an antiquated style and an affected simplicity of painting. . . . We can extend no toleration to a mere senile[1] imitation of the cramped style, false perspective, and crude colour of remote antiquity. . . . That morbid infatuation which sacrifices truth, beauty, and genuine feeling to mere eccentricity deserves no quarter at the hands of the public." Ruskin then wrote to the *Times* two letters, signed "The Author of *Modern Painters*," protesting that the pictures in question were not false whether in feeling or perspective, that their laboriousness entitled them to more than a hasty judgment, and that great things might be expected of the painters. He blames them for looking too narrowly, and he perceives a flowing and an impulse in nature that outstrips such slow labours as theirs; but his praises of their execution, in its kind, and of their colour, are large. "I have no acquaintance with any of these artists, and very imperfect sympathy with them," says the first letter; the apology was undertaken for the love of natural truth, evidently dear to the new painters. The *Times* letters were followed immediately by a pamphlet. The pre-Raphaelite brethren, says the preface, had been assailed "with the most scurrilous abuse which I ever recollect seeing issue from the press" (it must be owned that Ruskin's angry sentence is ill-written in three places); and the contention that follows is exceedingly interesting for reasons that seem to have escaped its readers. That is, Ruskin has always been represented as the champion of a group of young men of talent. This he was, and a generous one; he declared their work to be the "most earnest and complete" done in Europe since the day of Albert Dürer. But the pamphlet is by no means, in its essential argument, the eulogy of young men of talent. It is a frank proposal to young men of industry that they should apply themselves modestly to painting pictures of topographic, historic, scientific, or botanic interest *pour servir*. Ruskin is accused of seeing "genius" too readily; but there could hardly be a more candid declaration (it was too candid to be altogether understood) that genius was not to be looked for. The author of *Pre-Raphaelitism* says in effect that what is to be demanded of a multitude of painters (who can be no more than workmen, and ought to be good workmen) is a trustworthy and useful record of contemporary things having an unpictorial interest. He says further on :

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[1] The word is "senile" in early and late editions of Ruskin, but it is a strange word wherewith to rate young painters. The adjective you can read with your eyes shut, to go with "imitation," is "servile."

> "Many people have found fault with me for not 'teaching people how to arrange masses'; for not 'attributing sufficient importance to composition.' Alas! I attribute far more importance to it than they do—so much importance that I should just as soon think of sitting down to teach a man how to write a *Divina Commedia* or *King Lear*, as how to 'compose,' in the true sense, a single building or picture."

Such a comparison doubtless goes too far, or rather goes wrong, as demonstrations borrowed from each other by the arts must always do; for certainly there are things to be taught to a painter that have no counterpart in any things possible to teach to a poet. But I quote the passage in sign of the curious contention—it reappears in the first Slade lectures—that the majority of painters would do well to content themselves with pictures that are hardly pictures. Nothing more humiliating was ever said of modern art; it was so humiliating that no one would consent to understand it; was indeed too humiliating to be just.

The pre-Raphaelite pamphlet changes, after the introductory page, into a history of the art of Turner. Particularly instructive here is the history of the evolution of Turner's whole art of colour, from the kind of colour-stenography of the beginning; and excellent also the history of Turner's sympathy, of his ready admirations, of the help he consented to receive from weak painters, such as Claude, and refused from strong but more false painters, such as Salvator Rosa.

> "Besides, he had never seen classical life, and Claude was represented to him as a competent authority for it. But he had seen mountains and torrents, and knew therefore that Salvator could not paint them."

In 1800, facing the Continental landscape for himself, Turner cast Claude and the rest away, once for all, and relied upon his eagle eye, his imagination, and his "gigantic memory." Turner, says Ruskin, forgot himself, and forgot nothing else.

The *Times* letters of 1851 were followed by a letter, in 1854, in praise of Mr. Holman Hunt's "Light of the World"; and in this place—although it belongs to a much later date—may also be mentioned the paper on "The Three Colours of Pre-Raphaelitism" (*Nineteenth Century*, 1878), memorable for the happy passage upon that picture which corrupt criticism used to call the greatest in the world. Ruskin rehearses his former grave accusation of Raphael, that he confused and quenched the "veracities of the life of Christ"; and adds:

> "Raphael . . . after profoundly studying the arabesques of Pompeii and of the palace of the Cæsars, beguiled the tedium, and illustrated the spirituality, of the converse of Moses and Elias with Christ concerning His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem, by placing them, above the Mount of Transfiguration, in the attitudes of two humming-birds on the top of a honeysuckle."

CHAPTER IX

"LECTURES ON ARCHITECTURE AND PAINTING" (1853)

John Ruskin's career as a lecturer began at Edinburgh with a course of two lectures on architecture and two on painting. It was to take him later to the Slade chair at Oxford, to the Oxford Museum, to the Royal Institution, the London Institution, the South Kensington Museum, to Cambridge, Eton, Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Kendal, Bradford, Dublin, Tunbridge Wells, Woolwich, and into the lecture rooms of University College, Christ's Hospital, the Lambeth School of Art, St. Martin's School of Art, the Working Men's College, the Architectural Association, the Society of Arts, the Society of Antiquaries—and the list is not complete. This first appearance on the platform was made with the utmost charm of address, although the matter was controversial, and controversy followed. "I come before you," a passage in the second lecture avows, "professedly to speak of things forgotten or things disputed." And his opponents joined issue with him on the importance of architectural ornament, on its place, on the union of architect and sculptor in one, and, in general, on the Gothic city. For it was to the Gothic city that Ruskin intended to persuade his Modern Athens. He set forth with a comparison of Edinburgh with Verona—the one city whereof the beauty lay without, and the other whereof it lay without and within. To be beautiful, a town must be domestically beautiful, beautiful cumulatively in its dwellings, beautiful successively along its streets:

> "The great concerted music of the streets . . . when turret rises over turret, and casement frowns beyond casement, and tower succeeds to tower along the farthest ridges of the inhabited hills—this is a sublimity of which you can at present form no conception."

"Neither the mind nor the eye," he says elsewhere, "will accept a new college, or a new hospital, or a new institution, for a city"; and a fine church in a vile street is nothing but a superstition. Therefore he would rouse the citizens against their Ionic and Corinthian column, repeated without delight; and defending once again—it is central to his teaching—the theory of the certainties of beauty, he says:

> "Examine well the channels of your admiration, and you will find that they are, in verity, as unchangeable as the channels of your heart's blood."

Ruskin recommends the pointed window-opening for its greater strength. The common cross lintel is of a form that wastes strength, when it is strong, which, in modern building, is not often. And the pseudo-Greek decoration is wasted as well as the power, by its position at the top of the building. Pediments, stylobates, and architraves are dead. Fine Gothic is as various as nature's foliage, and this

Ruskin illustrates by an exquisite lesson on the leaves of the mountain ash; a sculptor should not repeat his sculpture, as a painter should not paint the same picture. Moreover, fine Gothic ornament is visible; it is chiefly rich about the doors, it is rough at a height above the eye; only in the degraded Gothic of Milan cathedral are the statues on the roof cut delicately.

> "Be assured that 'handling' is as great a thing in marble as in paint, and that the power of producing a masterly effect with few touches is as essential in an architect as in a draughtsman."

Thus he does not urge upon the modern citizen a costly manner of architecture, but resigns himself, since he must, to the poverty or penury of a society and age strangely given to boast of riches. The Gothic of dwellings is one with the Gothic church; the apse of Amiens is "but a series of windows surmounted by pure gables of open work"; the spire, the pointed tower of South Switzerland, are but the roof, which ought always to be very visible, made yet more visible.

> "Have not those words Pinnacle, Turret, Belfry, Spire, Tower, a pleasant sound in all your ears? . . . Do you think there is any group of words which would thus interest you when the things expressed by them are uninteresting?"

Some expense of controversy seems to be hardly worth while in Ruskin's contention that "ornamentation is the principal part of architecture considered as a fine art." For when the word "principal" is thoroughly explained, nothing is left in the proposition but what most architects would be willing to accept.

> "A Gothic cathedral is properly to be defined as a piece of the most magnificent associative sculpture arranged on the noblest principles of building."

But this principle is pushed far by Ruskin when he adds that architecture may be defined as "the art of designing sculpture for a particular place and placing it there on the best principles of building." Architecture, said his opponents, is "*par excellence* the art of proportion." So, rejoined Ruskin, is all art in the world, and none *par excellence;* all art depends from the beginning upon proportion for its existence, and Gothic has more proportions than other architecture, having a greater number of members.

The final lesson of the lectures is that Gothic with its liberal variety and interest "implies the liberty of the workman." Such a plea Ruskin thought would have won some reply from the modern heart; but it elicited none.

The two lectures on painting deal, the one with Turner and Claude (ground trodden in *Modern Painters*), and the other with the reforms attempted by the English pre-Raphaelites.

CHAPTER X

"ELEMENTS OF DRAWING" (1857)

THE three Letters to Beginners printed with this title require of the learner a simple discipleship and confidence—not blind, for everything is shown him in time, but expectant, and with good reasons for being intellectually predisposed to receive this instruction rather than another. It would be well to warn a student in Ruskin's drawing-class to look well to those reasons and to be sure they are good; for the teaching is intolerant of mixture with any other methods. That teaching, merely as it stands in this small book—lost in the astonishing quantity of its author's labours of the mind—proves an entire system of thought and practice, justified by pure principle and by the analysis of the work of masters. But the modern reader may wonder whether, a painter having been duly born, but having yet to be made, he would have a chance of being well made under the guidance of this book. Let no one think that if there were failure it would be the consequence of too literary a quality of instruction, and of the influence of a literary mind; Ruskin's work in these letters is artist's work, designer's and painter's work; Ruskin is more sure of the world of bodily vision, more obedient to all its limits—in a word, more technical—than an ordinary drawing-master in his class would know how to be.

Ruskin teaches his students to look at nature with simple eyes, to trust sight as the sense of the painter, a sense to be kept untampered with, unprompted, and unhampered. In a book on Velasquez, published in the winter of Ruskin's death, by a critic who perhaps would not have consented to quote a precept from Ruskin, nearly a page is devoted to the record of what the writer had been fortunate enough to hear said by a French painter; and this proves to be but a long statement of what Ruskin taught in a single phrase when he bade the student to seek to recover the innocence of the eye. And yet in spite of admirable theory, the frequently recurring praises of William Hunt, the water-colour painter of fruit, add to the reader's uneasiness. On the other hand, the student is taught to perceive the greatness of the greatest masters:

> "You may look, with trust in their being always right, at Titian, Veronese, Tintoret, Giorgione, John Bellini, and Velasquez. You may look with admiration, admitting, however, question of right and wrong, at Van Eyck, Holbein, Perugino, Francia, Angelico, Leonardo da Vinci, Correggio, Vandyck, Rembrandt, Reynolds, Gainsborough, Turner, and the modern pre-Raphaelites."

Michelangiolo, Raphael, and Rubens are great masters, but not masters for students; Murillo, Salvator, Claude, Gaspar Poussin, Teniers, are dangerous.

> "You may look, however, for examples of evil, with safe universality of reprobation, being sure that

everything you see is bad, at Domenichino, the Caracci, Bronzino, and the figure pieces of Salvator."

In this lesson, the teacher disclaims any intention of placing his great ones higher or lower than one another; it is a lesson for those who go to the galleries to learn to work and not only to learn to judge. Let us contrast with this another lesson (this one from the appendix) on things to be studied, whereby the young artist is directed to read the poets—Scott, Wordsworth, Keats, Crabbe, Tennyson, the two Brownings, Lowell, Longfellow, and Coventry Patmore alone amongst the moderns. "Cast Coleridge at once aside, as sickly and useless; and Shelley as shallow and verbose." Byron is but withheld for a time, with praise of his "magnificence." And we have Patmore—the poet of spiritual passion and lofty distinction—praised for "quiet modern domestic feeling" and a "finished piece of writing." And Shelley "verbose"—*Adonais* verbose, and not *Endymion!* All the living poets whom Ruskin praised—Browning, Rossetti, and Patmore amongst them—had to endure to be praised side by side with Longfellow, and they did not love the association. But in all this strange sentence nothing is less intelligible than the word which commends to the young student—urged in the same breath to restrict himself to what is generous, reverend, and peaceful—all the writings of Robert Browning. The student is warned to refrain from even noble, even pure, satire, from coldness, and from a sneer; and is yet sent to a poet who gave his imagination to the invention of infernal hate in the *Spanish Cloister*, and of the explanations of Mr. Sludge and Bishop Blougram, busily, indefatigably squalid and ignoble, and delighting in derision. This appendix must have been written in a perverse mood; but in the text what exquisite lessons of proportion, and of colour! For instance, "The eye should feel white as a space of strange, heavenly paleness in the midst of the feeling of colours," and "You must make the black conspicuous, the black should look strange"; what a sense of the growth of trees, of flowers with their delicate inflections of law, their vital symmetry and asymmetry, and their progress, their relation, from stem to limit of leaf; what a steady—nay eternal—vision of movement—"the animal in its motion, the tree in its growth, the cloud in its course, the mountain in its wearing away!" And in the lesson on colour occurs the humour that might be a woman's or a child's, if woman or child could ever be womanly or childish enough to conceive it—it is in a fine passage on the economy of nature: "Sometimes I have really thought her miserliness intolerable; in a gentian, for instance, the way she economises her ultramarine down in the bell is a little too bad." With *Elements of Drawing* should be named *Elements of Perspective*, a series of lessons intended to be read in connection with the first three books of Euclid, signs of yet another intellect—the mathematical—added to this wonderful spirit. The drawings that accompany *Elements of Drawing* are of great beauty.

CHAPTER XI

"THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF ART" (1857)

THIS little volume holds the substance of two lectures given at Manchester. The lecturer exercises here the pleasant art of stimulating his hearers by a paradox, and of following the phrase of surprise by an irrefutable exposition. His theme is the right expenditure of public money. He, like the other economists, has to find room, in the national dispensations, for expense upon the arts, and in some sort the luxuries, of life. Christian and ascetic, he has to consent to this use of the fruits of the labours of the poor, as the severe but not ascetic "Manchester" economist also must needs do. Mill, who insists that all unproductive consumption is so much loss and destruction, evidently arranges for, and tolerates, so much loss and destruction in a certain cause; he allows the artist to destroy what he consumes. With such permission a purely scientific writer has nothing to do. Like a writer on arithmetic, a writer on political economy proper states these laws, those causes, and yonder consequences, and is not called upon, as an economist, to approve or disapprove of an act that would disregard the purely economic results. (I shall have to urge the same point in regard to the later work—*Unto this Last.*) And this is why it is irritating to hear men speak of doing such or such a thing "in spite of the political economists," or "notwithstanding the professors of the dismal science." The calculators of a nation's wealth are simply to state their calculations; that done, they might be the first to cherish ethical, or political, or human reasons why loss and gain should in such or such a case be disregarded; or, on the other hand, they might hold it to be wiser to disregard the results in loss and gain as little as possible. But in either case they would cease for the time to speak purely as economists or calculators. Ruskin, needless to say, unites the two functions, as indeed almost all other writers have done. He thinks precisely, and having "done the sum," he passes to the other function, and does the ethical work for which his calculation has given him material. In these two lectures he plans some order in that strictly unproductive expenditure without which civilisation could hardly endure. The theme of this book is righteous spending, while the theme of *Time and Tide* is chiefly righteous sparing; and he has much to say here of the honour and the power of riches and the disgrace (let us say the *disgrazia* in the Italian sense) of poverty, while in *Fors Clavigera* he gives a solemn personal assurance—solemn and personal even for him—that for the rich man there is no safety unless he shall "piously and prudently" dispose himself to become poor. But the poverty he deplores is manifestly the ignorant and forsaken poverty that no man ought to endure; the poverty for the love whereof a man of heart despoils himself is the poverty of simplicity; and even the poverty of the simple is to be sought chiefly in order that there should be none, or less, of the poverty of the forsaken. In this very lecture on the administration of wealth for the fostering of art, the nation and the man are warned alike that the spending which would be lawful in a society where none were starving for lack of work ought to be foregone or deferred there where children have no bread.

The nation, says in effect the lecturer on "The Political Economy of Art," is as free and as bound, as responsible and as dependent in its inter-relation, as a household, and a nation is governable like a farm. If any one shall say that the similitude is too domestic, the reply shall be that it is not domestic enough.

> "The real type of a well-organised nation must be presented, not by a farm cultivated by servants who wrought for hire, . . . but by a farm in which the master was a father, and in which all the servants were sons."

With a peculiar humour, Ruskin begs his hearers not to be alarmed at the menacing word "fraternity." The French who used it, he declares (for the reassuring of a Manchester audience) to have gone wrong in their experiment. But the cause of their error he states without irony. It was that they refused to acknowledge that fraternity implied a paternity. The world, nevertheless, does not utter the word paternal without burlesque—"a paternal government"—nor the word fraternal without defiance. It does not chance that paternity is spoken of threateningly or fraternity with irony; but this might have been the humour of the commonwealth, instead of the other. Obviously, what Ruskin teaches in the political part of this lecture is the necessity of authority and—once the arbitrary tyrannies of primitive society are done away, which is early in all civilisations—the nullity of the "liberty" that men have died for with alacrity age by age.

Wealth ought not to be acquired by covetousness, nor distributed by prodigality, nor hoarded by avarice, nor increased by competition, nor destroyed by luxury. To none of these forms of egoism should be abandoned the important economy of money. Ruskin insists upon the special responsibility of man for that talent—not the talent of wit or intellect or influence with the bishops, but the talent of money literally. In "The Political Economy of Art" the reader should note the fine page upon the destruction of wealth, as well as of art, that is wrought not by the tooth of time:

> "Fancy what Europe would be now, if the delicate statues and temples of the Greeks,—if the broad roads and massy walls of the Romans,—if the noble and pathetic architecture of the middle ages had not been ground to the dust by mere human rage."

CHAPTER XII

"THE TWO PATHS" (1859)

The principal teaching of this volume, ratified by a preface in 1878, is summed up thus:

> "The law which it has been my effort chiefly to illustrate is the dependence of all noble design, in any kind, on the sculpture or painting of Organic Form. This is the vital law: lying at the root of all that I have ever tried to teach respecting architecture or any other art. It is also the law most generally disallowed."

It is possible that to this book was due much of the impatience and anger spent, the day before yesterday, upon Ruskin's art-theory. By the day before yesterday I mean the time of a flow that has already been succeeded by some ebbing movement, and, in this case, the time between the popularising in England of the "art for art" of the French, about 1880, and the day when the last journalist flagged in the last repetition thereof—and it took him nearly twenty years. In October 1899 a fugitive writer in a conspicuous art-review spoke of "the unutterable bosh written by Ruskin about art"; and the inferior clownishness of that reviewer is only the latest mimicking of the higher clownishness of criticism a little earlier written.

The teaching of *The Two Paths* has been thought out by its author in the very interior intricacies. It is dogmatic in proportion to the difficulty which he certainly knows he found in that inner place, but which he never explicitly confesses. Two paths there are, he teaches, one leading to destruction and the other to life. The one is that of the artist who loves his own skill and seeks first his pleasure in beauty, and the other is that of him who loves nature and studies the beauty of her truth and never lets go his grasp upon the laws of natural living form. Both artists may—nay, must—draw conventionally at times, and at times must design the mosaic patterns, or the diaper patterns, that ultimately resemble each other, assuredly, from whichever path they are approached. It seems that Ruskin insists upon a difference, even in this ultimate point. And yet the prettiest and most ingenious oriental diaper of fret-work (which he denounces) has a suggestion in natural curve, or even in the curve of organic life, as the Lombard ornament (which he approves) has a suggestion in natural crystallisation—that is, in something other than organic form properly so-called. A similar difficulty occurs to the reader in regard to all "convention," however slight.

This, however, is a difficulty, as it were, at the end of the argument. At its head Ruskin has placed a difficulty that meets the reader with a very menace. The title of this first lecture is "The Deteriorative Powers of Conventional Art over Nations." The adjective "conventional" seems to mitigate the predicate of this lecture; but there is no such mitigation in the text, which declares roundly that from the moment when a perfect picture is painted or a perfect statue wrought within a State, that State begins to derogate. Not only is the word "conventional" omitted, but the word "perfect" seems to bar it out. Then comes the tremendous contrast with which Ruskin commands his readers and compels them to attend to what shall follow. Thus it stands: India (then lately guilty of the Mutiny and accused of more evil than she had committed) is a nation possessed of exquisite art, but given over to every infernal passion—cruelty and the rest. Scotland is a nation full of the dignity of virtue and possessed of no art whatever except that of arranging lines of colour at right angles in the plaid. Splendid are these pages, with their nobility and temperance of diction in the statement of what is most certainly a disastrous exaggeration. They close with the assertion of a brief and absolute opposition: "Out of the peat cottage come faith, courage, self-sacrifice, purity, and piety . . .; out of the ivory palace come treachery, cruelty, cowardice, idolatry, bestiality." Who, nevertheless, in calmer thought dare ratify such a sentence? "Piety"—alas! "Purity"—alas, alas! The judgment on the Hindoo calls for more indignant groans. To pass to the art, however: Indian art "never represents a natural fact," says Ruskin; but (putting aside the certain truth that it is suggested by natural fact, and that the European "conventional" art is no more than suggested by natural fact) what becomes of his contention that

Indian art is therefore a portent of degradation, in view of the statement on a previous page that the perfect statue and the perfect picture were also, in Rome and Venice, portents of degradation? Surely the perfect statue represents a natural fact. And at the end of a close and urgent argument, the reader asks where, then, is Scotland in all this? The Scot of the cottage does not produce the art taught by organic form which is so nobly described as righteous—he produces *no* art; or stay, he produces the plaid just mentioned, which is much, much less organic than anything in the whole range of Indian design. The curve of an Indian shawl-pattern has a natural inspiration; what life—let alone the noble animal and human life which Ruskin declares to be the highest inspiration of art—but what life, however humble, what life of any degree of humbleness, is represented, much less imitated, by the plaid? To despise life is, Ruskin teaches, the first and ultimate sin. Well, then, asks his reader, are they to be held innocent of that sin who, having before their eyes the living proportion of common plant-growth, and the form of rock, less vital yet erect in all the gravity of natural law, yet turned their eyes away and ruled the lines of their tartan; who, having in sight the soft gloomy purple of their heather and the soft brown of their streams, chose to put that yellow line between that blue and that red—the hardest colours of all men's invention? I want such a phrase as Ruskin alone could give me to denounce the hatred of nature and the contempt of life which the plaid could be made to prove. And see what significance he attaches to the mere straying from nature in the Hindoo! "He draws no plant, but only a spiral." But the Scot loved the plant not enough to draw even a spiral; he ruled straight lines.

If I have treated this book with controversy, it was impossible to do otherwise. But out of its treasures of wisdom take the page in praise of Titian which ends with the passage: "Nobody cares much at heart about Titian; only there is a strange undercurrent of everlasting murmur about his name, which means the deep consent of all great men that he is greater than they," and so on to the end. For wit take this, from the important section of the lecture on "Modern Manufacture and Design," that partly condemns the usual teaching of symmetry:

> "If you learn to draw a leaf well, you are taught . . . to turn it the other way, opposite to itself; and the two leaves set opposite ways are called 'a design.' . . . But if once you learn to draw the human figure, you will find that knocking two men's heads together does not necessarily constitute a good design."

The incident (in the same lecture) of the sporting handkerchief is full of signs of charming wit. The reader must be referred to the illustration, but let him be assured that Ruskin had the best of it in his controversy with his friend. His friend proved to him that series, symmetry, and contrast were the material of design, but used them so cleverly that Ruskin could show him by his own work how such use could not be taught, measured, or ruled; and, moreover, used them with so little beauty that Ruskin was able to reply to him that not mere symmetry, but lovely symmetry, was proper to art. For felicity of word read what follows:

> "Outside the town I came upon an old English cottage, or mansion, I hardly know which to call it, set close under the hill, and beside the river, . . . with mullioned windows and a low arched porch; round which, in the little triangular garden, one can imagine the family as they used to sit in old summer times, the ripple of the river heard faintly through the sweet-briar hedge, and the sheep on the far-off wolds shining in the evening sunlight. There, uninhabited for many and many a year, it had been left in unregarded havoc of ruin; the garden-gate still swung loose to its latch; the garden, blighted utterly into a field of ashes, not even a weed taking root there; the roof torn, . . . the shutters hanging about the windows in rags of rotten weed; before its gate, the stream which had gladdened it now soaking slowly by, black as ebony, and thick with curdling scum; the bank above it trodden into unctuous, sooty slime; far in front of it, between it and the old hills, the furnaces of the city foaming forth perpetual plague of sulphurous darkness; the volumes of their storm clouds coiling low over a waste of grassless fields."

That is the circumstance of the designer at Rochdale; and in such conditions fine design is impossible. This, on the other hand, is the circumstance of the great designer at Pisa:

"On each side of a bright river he saw rise a line of brighter palaces, arched and pillared, and inlaid with deep red porphyry, and with serpentine; along the quays, before their gates, were riding troops of knights, noble, in face and form, dazzling in crest and shield; horse and man one labyrinth of quaint colour and gleaming light—the purple, and silver, and scarlet fringes flowing over the strong limbs and clashing mail like sea-waves over rocks at sunset. Opening on each side from the river were gardens, courts, and cloisters; long successions of white pillars among wreaths of vine; leaping of fountains through buds of pomegranate and orange; and still along the garden-paths, and under and through the crimson of the pomegranate shadows, moving slowly, groups of the fairest women that Italy ever saw—fairest, because purest and thoughtfullest; trained in all high knowledge, as in all courteous art—in dance, in song, in sweet wit, in lofty learning, in loftier courage, in loftiest love—able alike to cheer, to enchant or save, the souls of men. Above all this scenery of perfect human life, rose dome and bell-tower, burning with white alabaster and gold; beyond dome and bell-tower the slopes of mighty hills, hoary with olive; far in the north, above a purple sea of peaks of solemn Apennine, the clear, sharp-cloven Carrara mountains sent up their steadfast flowers of marble summit into amber sky; the great sea itself, scorching with expanse of light, stretching from their feet to the Gorgonian Isles; and over all these, ever present, near or far—seen through the leaves of vine, or imaged with all its march of clouds in the Arno's stream, or set with its depth of blue close against the golden hair and burning cheek of lady or knight—that untroubled and sacred sky, which was to all men, in those days of innocent faith indeed the unquestioned abode of spirits, as the earth was of men, . . . a heaven in which every cloud that passed was literally the chariot of an angel, and every ray of its Evening and Morning streamed from the throne of God."

Over-rich, even for its purpose, is a phrase now and then; but that sentence, "close against the golden hair and burning cheek . . . the untroubled and sacred sky," is purely beautiful. As to the significance of this contrast (for controversy must have it again), how are we to take it? Here is Rochdale declared unable to design beautifully because of its internal and surrounding hideousness; India able to design beautifully, with vice, in the midst of beauty; Pisa able to design beautifully in the midst of beauty, with virtue, according to this golden picture; Scotland unable to design beautifully, with virtue, in the midst of beauty. What is the lesson, finally? And besides this general doubt as to what these several things have to prove to us, there is also a local question. I never stand under that untroubled and sacred sky but with a remembrance of a tower, long fallen, that filled a place in the sunny blue aloft. Many a space of the earth has been a site of the suffering of man; but here is a space of the very sky that has been a site of human wrongs intolerable. Above, in that delicate air, was the upper chamber of the Tower of Famine; high in that now vacant and serene space sounded the voice of Ugolino and his sons. Earth has everywhere her graves; but no other sky than the Pisan sky holds such a place as this.

The world—nature—is full of unanswerable questions. It was a courageous enterprise to answer one of them in this book—a great enterprise, a great defeat.

To small minds, and to the vulgar, the desire to reply to those perpetual questions is a matter of daily habit. They have no doubt as to two paths, or as to the destination of each, or the cause of its inclining. But here, for once, is a great mind condemning itself to the disaster of judgment and decision, in its divine good faith. It is hardly credible that the intellectual martyrdom of the enterprise of writing *The Two Paths* should have been hailed with the laughter of the untroubled. So, nevertheless, it has been.

Tragedy is not, says Hegel, in the conflict of right with wrong, but in the conflict of right with right. Ruskin was nobly reluctant to confess such a strife, or to be the spectator of such a battle. Hence he must declare two paths. But his own labour of the mind, his book, is, in the sense of Hegel, tragic.

For a far better quality of splendid English than the descriptive passage above quoted, I would cite this from the lecture that urges upon architects their great vocation as sculptors:

> "Is there anything within range of sight, or conception, which may not be of use to *you?* . . . Whatever may be conceived of Divine, or beheld of Human, may be dared or adopted by you; throughout the kingdom of animal life, no creature is so vast, or so minute, that you cannot deal with it, or bring it into service; the lion and the crocodile will couch about your shafts; the moth and bee will sun them-

selves upon your flowers; for you, the fawn will leap; for you, the snail will be slow; for you, the dove smooth her bosom, and the hawk spread her wings towards the south. All the wide world of vegetation blooms and bends for you; the leaves tremble that you may bid them be still under the marble snow; the thorn and the thistle, which the earth casts forth as evil, are to you the kindliest servants; no dying petal, nor drooping tendril, is so feeble as to have no help for you; no robed pride of blossom so kingly, but it will lay aside its purple to receive at your hands its pale immortality."

Again, Ruskin compares the interest of the geologist, of the naturalist, with that of the sculptor, in the things they study. "*You* must get the storm-spirit into your eagles, and the lordliness into your lions." And again he shows the forms of lifeless things—the all but invisible shells that shall lend their shapes to the starred traceries of a cathedral roof, the torn cable that can twine into a perfect moulding: "You who can crown the mountain with its fortress, and the city with its towers, are thus able also to give beauty to ashes and worthiness to dust." He presses the example of the ancient architects: did *they* employ a subordinate workman as sculptor, ordering of him "bishops at so much a mitre, and cripples at so much a crutch"? Was the procession on the portal of Amiens wrought so?

Amongst the many sentences that in the course of all Ruskin's books correct his teaching that nothing in nature should be rejected are these: "A looking-glass does not design—it receives and communicates indiscriminately . . .; a painter designs when he chooses some things, refuses others, and arranges all." And "Design, properly so called, is human invention, consulting human capacity" (a most admirable definition).

> "Out of the infinite heap of things around us in the world, it chooses a certain number which it can thoroughly grasp, and presents this group to the spectator in the form best calculated to enable him to grasp it also, and to grasp it with delight."

Japanese art was unconsidered at the time of the writing of these lectures. One may wonder how would the art, the people, their gentleness, their vices, their monstrous burlesque of human form, the distortion, the familiarity, the jeer, the mockery, the malice, the delicate and intent study of natural fact in plants and in birds, the vitality, and especially the love of innocent life,—how would the men and their art show under the intricate tests of *The Two Paths?* Where would Japan stand in that entanglement of India, Scotland, Rochdale, and Pisa?

The last lecture is on "The Work of Iron in Nature, Art, and Policy." The history of the colour of iron in the landscape is brilliant writing. The warning against the foolish use of the word "freedom," and against the foolish enthusiasm for the vague idea, repeats what Ruskin has said often: "No human being, however great or powerful, was ever so free as a fish. There is always something that he must, or must not, do."

"In these and all matters you never can reason finally from the abstraction, for both liberty and restraint are good when they are nobly chosen, . . . but of the two . . . it is restraint which characterises the higher creature, and betters the lower creature; and, from the ministering of the archangel to the labour of the insect,—from the poising of the planets to the gravitation of a grain of dust,—the power and glory of all creatures, and all matter, consist in their obedience, not in their freedom."

CHAPTER XIII

"UNTO THIS LAST" (1860)

"I REST satisfied with the work, though with nothing else that I have done," says John Ruskin in the preface to the first issue after the publication had been stopped in the *Cornhill Magazine;* and in 1888 he said that he would be content that all the rest of his books should be destroyed rather than this. The book was to give in plain English—"it has often been incidentally given in good Greek by Plato and Xenophon, and good Latin by Cicero and Horace"—a logical definition of wealth. The first paper, "The Roots of Honour," treats of the wages of labour, and at the outset relieves the reader of the usual burden of deciding whether the interests of employer and labourer are alike or opposed. According to circumstances they may be either. But it is not to the chance of the harmony of interests, nor to the possible equity of opposition of interests—not to any chance whatever—that Ruskin would entrust the rate of wages. Unlike other writers on economy at that day, he thinks it possible that the rate of wages in industry and agriculture should be fixed by legislation, and fixed irrespectively of the demand for labour. Why has the possibility so long been denied, in face of the fact that for all important and some unimportant labour, wages are so regulated—wages of the prime minister, the bishop, the general, the cabman, the lawyer, the physician? The difficulty as to good and bad work Ruskin decides thus—the good labourer would be employed and the bad would not; but all employed should have the same wages. This, moreover, is done in the cases of the professions already named. A bad workman should not be permitted to offer his work at half-price, to the probable injury of the good; it is his freedom to do so, and not regulation, that is artificial and unnatural. Education would continuously lessen the number of bad workmen. The second aim of true political economy, and a difficult one, is to maintain employment steadily despite the "sudden and extensive inequalities of demand." But this difficulty, though great, would not be so great if the rushes and relaxations, overwork and idleness alternately, that come of unequal wages, were at an end. There would be a calming-down, and employment would become more equal. Furthermore, the labourer might be taught to live and work more steadily, and therefore more evenly, by the counsel of a good employer. And the good employer would be a merchant (for example) who should accept his own function in the spirit of the lawyer, soldier, or pastor—should provide by commerce for the nation, as those administer law, defend, or teach, not seeking profit in the first place, but rendering in the first place the definite service of providing.

The second paper, "The Veins of Wealth," draws the distinction between mercantile economy (as it actually is) and true political economy, the first being that rule of riches which implies poverty—that is, relative riches, the riches of individuals or classes; whereas political economy is the order of riches of the nation, in harmony, not in internal contrasts. The art of becoming rich in the mercantile sense is the art of keeping others poor. Without their poverty, obviously, the successful man would have neither servants nor husbandmen at his disposal. "The establishment of the mercantile wealth which consists in a claim upon labour signifies a political diminution of the real wealth which consists in substantial possessions." That is, the man who has become poor, and thus indebted in labour to the rich, has been unprofitable to the State. If the rich withdraws into idleness, he too becomes unprofitable to the State. The wealth of individuals may be gathered in masses, but whether for good or evil no one can tell by the mere fact of its existence. It tends to gather unequally; the obvious inequalities of health, character, and ability will have it so. But the sight of a class enriched ought not to beguile a student of economy to think he sees a nation rich. Nor must—so John Ruskin teaches—the inequality be left to the exaggerations of the unregulated action of forces. The economists of 1860 would have it that the course of demand and supply cannot be controlled by human laws.

> "Precisely in the same sense . . . the waters of the world go where they are required. Where the land falls the water flows. . . . But the disposition and administration . . . can be altered by human forethought."

Ruskin then labours to find a rate of wages so just that legislation may approve and enforce it.

> "The abstract idea of just or due wages . . . is that they will consist in a sum of money which will at any time procure for [the labourer] at least as much labour as he has given. . . . And this equity . . . of payment is, observe, wholly independent of any reference to the number of men who are willing to do the work."

The smith who gives his skill and a quarter of an hour of his life to forging a horse-shoe has a right to a quarter of an hour of equal life and skill, at least, in payment, when he needs it. Then comes the difficulty of translating this into the kinds of payment the smith will actually desire. But Ruskin believes that the discovery of the right representation of exchange is no more difficult than that of the "maxima and minima of the vulgar economist"; the cheapest market in which the vulgar economists recommend a man to buy and the dearest in which they advise him to sell have to be groped for, surely, by hard measures. (How right Ruskin is when he says that commercial riches implies poverty is proved by this once respected maxim. The vaunted wealth was not and never could be "political"; for there was necessarily a man selling in the cheapest market and buying in the dearest at every "operation" of the "principle"—the principle!—"Buy in the cheapest," &c.) In brief, a just man *approaches* the just price, as an unjust approaches his "cheapest" and "dearest" markets. Nay, the just man comes easily nearer to the object of his search; or it would be better to say that there is something for him to come at, whereas the commercial economist touches ground nowhere.

> "It is easier to determine scientifically what a man ought to have for his work than what his necessities will compel him to take for it. His necessities can only be ascertained by empirical, but his due by analytical, investigation."

Neither the just nor the unjust hirer employs two men where only one man is needed. But in the just case the hired labourer may be able to hire, for his own necessities, another workman by the purchase of what he needs; and the influence of this ability passes on through all the kinds and grades of labour. Ruskin's system would tend to send wealth flowing. It was, needless to say, accused of socialism, to which he answers, not very profoundly but profoundly enough for the purpose: "Whether socialism has made more progress among the army and navy (where payment is made on my principles) or among the manufacturing operatives (who are paid on my opponents' principles) I leave it to those opponents to ascertain." He recognises as no other has done "the impossibility of equality." He had said in *Modern Painters*, "Government and Co-operation are . . . the Laws of Life; Anarchy and Competition the Laws of Death." A modern reader may wonder that Ruskin should, in replying to a charge of socialism, defend himself by the strange means of a denunciation of anarchy.

Anarchy and Socialism are the two poles of political principle, as we know now that the words are better defined; yet even to-day the two opposites are confused in daily speech. The truth is that Ruskin's system is highly socialistic because it is opposed to anarchy and to the licence of irresponsible forces such as competition. But his meaning is not at all confused, although in this one instance his diction is so.

To this essay there are two important notes; one announcing Ruskin as a complete Free-trader, despite his perception of the false grounds on which the public of that day believed in Free trade; and another suggesting that human passion might enter into the calculations of science as justly as the "mere thought" to the importance whereof Mill confessed that he could set no limit, " even in a purely productive and material point of view." Mill even assigns a certain action to " feelings," but only to those " of a disagreeable kind," as discouragements of labour. Ruskin would permit feelings " of an agreeable kind " to have their turn.

The fourth and last essay, " Ad Valorem," deals with the search, above-indicated, of " the equivalent " —the payment that would represent, in the hands of the labourer, his right to the labour of another. Ruskin, in this research, defines Value, Wealth, Price, and Produce. I confess I do not think him to be fair either to Mill or to his own argument when he withers that writer for his saying that political economy has nothing to do with " the estimate of the moralist."

Mill might justly say this of a science, and yet be willing that the science should be overruled. The economist's business is to demonstrate the laws of wealth and their working, and if this were done scientifically Ruskin would have no ground of opposition. But, on the other hand, he has legitimate ground in his contention that Mill is unscientific, because it is unscientific to make no calculation of human feeling except feeling "of a disagreeable kind." Into that contention, however, I do not see that moral indignation should enter, albeit intellectual irritation may. It is not Ruskin's anger that replies pat to Mill's error, but Ruskin's detection, declared in this sentence: "The only conclusions of his which I have to dispute are those which follow from his premises." For he found that Mill covertly introduced the "moral estimate" he professed to exclude. It is much to the purpose also to expose Mill's definition: "Wealth consists of all useful and agreeable objects which possess exchangeable value." Usefulness cannot—agreeableness certainly cannot—be separated from human passion. "Therefore," Ruskin says, "political economy, being a science of wealth, must be a science respecting human capacities and dispositions." A "definition" of Ricardo's he shows to be a strange misfit indeed; and a plain reader wishes Cobbett were there to trip, entangle, and fell Ricardo in his abominable pronouns: "Utility is not the measure of exchangeable value, though it is absolutely essential to it." In making his own definition of value Ruskin does admirable work in words. He reminds us of the nominative of *valorem* and of its reference to health and, in the original sense, to virtue:

> "A truly valuable thing is that which leads to life. . . . In proportion as it does not lead to life, or as its strength is broken, it is less valuable; in proportion as it leads away from life, it is invaluable."

This value is independent of opinion, and of quantity. Here we get back, as in every one of Ruskin's books, to that absolute good that Carlyle warned us not to doubt at our peril. Within all Ruskin's science, all his art, all his sight, and all his thought stands *this:*

> "The real science of political economy, which has yet to be distinguished from the bastard science, as medicine from witchcraft, . . . is that which teaches nations to desire and labour for the things that lead to life."

It is to teach them to destroy things that lead to destruction, and to forsake indifferent things that do negative evil. Ruskin then defines "wealth" or "having," adding to Mill's definition: "To be wealthy is to have a large stock of useful articles," the not unnecessary words, "which we can use," and thus bringing in once again the human power and the human heart. "Wealth," he says, "instead of depending merely on a 'have,' is thus seen to depend on a 'can.' Gladiator's death, on a 'habet'; but soldier's victory, and state's salvation, on a '*quo plurimum posset*.'" "Wealth . . . is the possession of the valuable by the valiant." As to price, he teaches that in as much as it is exchange value, it has nothing to do with profit. It is only in labour there can be profit, or advance. The processes of exchange, in so far as they are laborious, may bear profit, as involved in the labours of production; but the pure exchange is absolute exchange and nothing more. Acquisition there is in mercantile exchange, but the word profit should represent increase such as that of the workshop and the field. Profit is of "political," acquisition of "mercantile," importance; acquisition makes poor by the same act as it makes rich. The making rich is conspicuous, and the making poor is obscure, but none the less real because it is obscure, of the back-street, and finally of the grave; nothing is more obscure in this world. Ruskin holds the science of acquisition to be the one science that is "founded on nescience, and an art founded on artlessness." All other arts and sciences, except this, "have for their object the doing away with their opposite nescience and artlessness." This alone needs the existence of the ignorance and helplessness whereby its knowledge and power may work.

> "The general law, then, respecting just or economical exchange, is simply this: There must be advantage on both sides (or if only advantage on one, at least no disadvantage on the other), . . . and just payment for his time, intelligence, and labour to any intermediate person effecting the transaction. . . . And whatever advantage there is on either side, and whatever pay is given to the intermediate

person, should be thoroughly known. All attempt at concealment implies some practice of the opposite, or undivine, science, founded on nescience."

What we wish for is to be reckoned with amongst our gettings, as well as what we need. We wish for romantic things, and ideal; "and the regulation of the purse is, in its essence, regulation of the imagination and the heart." Phenomena of price are therefore extremely complex, but price is to be calculated finally in labour, and Ruskin goes on to define the nature of that standard. "The price of other things must always be counted by the quantity of labour; not the price of labour by the quantity of other things." And this is well illustrated by an instance too long to quote. To this section belongs the singularly interesting sentence on consumption as the end, crown, and perfection of production. Ruskin and Mill agree mainly in regard to the impoverishing political effect of the consumption of the unproductive classes and of the vain or vicious consumption of the productive classes; but pure consumption Mill inclines to treat as though there were, at any rate, no good in it, whereas Ruskin declares it to be in itself good. I own that Mill seems to me on this point more logical; that Ruskin's estimate is rather of the joy and happiness whereof consumption is the cost than of consumption itself; and that it is scientific to treat consumption as loss—necessary loss or unnecessary—but still loss. Obviously if men could live for a generation without food all granaries might overflow; and eating gives pleasure, but the pleasure does not consist in eating as an act of destruction. Ruskin, however, seems to speak more indisputably when he declares all wealth to be measured by this human capacity of consumption, and shows good measures of consumption to be as worthy of an economist's study as good measures of production. He next opposes Mill's assertion that "A demand for commodities is not a demand for labour." It is one of the knotty points. Near this follows a fine passage on wars of capitalists and on the taxing of future generations.

In a word, the book is part of the perpetual plea of righteousness against blind self-interest, and the plea is scientific. It closes with some pages beautiful beyond praise, and full of the dignity of confidence in unalterable facts. Whilst man lives by bread, by the very wheat and the flocks, the sacred necessities of his body—of his mouth—will be the moderate measure of his common and daily wealth.

> "All England may, if it chooses, become one manufacturing town; and Englishmen, sacrificing themselves to the good of general humanity, may live diminished lives in the midst of noise, of darkness, and of deadly exhalation. But the world cannot become a factory or a mine. . . . Neither the avarice nor the rage of men will ever feed them. . . . So long as men live by bread, the far away valleys must laugh as they are covered with the gold of God, and the shouts of His happy multitudes ring round the winepress and the well."

Then he consoles the mere sentimentalist, who might fear that the tilled country, peopled one day with its natural inheritors, would lose its beauty. Not so, Ruskin says; let the desert have its own place, but the soil is "loveliest in habitation. . . . The desire of the heart is also the desire of the eyes." In this he proves his conversion from the young passion of *Modern Painters* for solitudes and its contempt of potato-patches. He ends:

> "Not greater wealth, but simpler pleasure. . . . Waste nothing, and grudge nothing. Care in nowise to make more of money, but care to make much of it; remembering always the great, palpable, inevitable fact—that what one person has, another cannot have. . . . And if, on due and honest thought over these things, it seems that the kind of existence to which men are now summoned by every plea of pity and claim of right, may, for some time at least, not be a luxurious one;—consider whether, even supposing it guiltless, luxury could be desired by any of us, if we saw clearly at our sides the suffering which accompanies it in the world. . . . The cruelest man living could not sit at his feast, unless he sat blindfold. Raise the veil boldly; face the light; and if, as yet, the light of the eye can only be through tears, and the light of the body through sackcloth, go thou forth weeping, bearing precious seed."

How did the world hear this appeal? It replied with a laugh. Was, then, the argument of the book so hollow that the first comer could refute it? Was the feeling of the book so small that the first comer might deride it? John Ruskin was bidden to go back to his art-criticism. Thackeray stopped the papers in the *Cornhill*. The unsold copies of the reissue remained on the publisher's hands. *Munera Pulveris*, a more technical work on economy, was equally unacceptable in the pages of *Fraser's Magazine*.

And now, after forty years, "the living wage" is but another name for Ruskin's fixity of payments. The old-age pensions of to-day or to-morrow are of his proposal; so are technical and elementary education by the State; government workshops; fair rents; fixity of tenure; compensation for improvements; compulsory powers of allotment; the preservation of commons; municipal recognition of trades-union rates of wages; all are, or are to be, rehearsals of measures suggested by him, in this book or elsewhere, to the legislature. Private undertakings have followed him no less in the building and regulation of houses for the poor.

CHAPTER XIV

"SESAME AND LILIES" (1864-1869)

THIS also was a work solemnly presented. Ruskin took it for the initial volume of the revised series of his writings, furnished it with a new preface, and added to the two lectures a third, which every attentive reader must hold to be amongst the most momentous of the expressions of his mind. It is not surprising, to one who has recognised in the book a supreme value, to find that in the later preface its author declares it to contain the best of many statements of his purpose. In the same pages he takes occasion to present himself to those whose confidence he asks:

> " Not an unjust person ; not an unkind one ; a lover of order, labour, and peace. That, it seems to me, is enough to give me right to say all I care to say on ethical subjects ; more, I could only tell definitely through details of autobiography such as none but prosperous and (in the simple sense of the word) faultless lives could justify; and mine has been neither. Yet if any one, skilled in reading the torn manuscripts of the human soul, cares for more intimate knowledge of me, he may have it by knowing with what persons in past history I have most sympathy.
>
> " I will name three.
>
> " In all that is strongest and deepest in me, that fits me for my work, and gives light or shadow to my being, I have sympathy with Guido Guinicelli.

"In my constant natural temper, and thoughts of things and people, with Marmontel.

"In my enforced and accidental temper, and thoughts of things and people, with Dean Swift."

The first lecture—"Sesame: of Kings' Treasuries"—is chiefly a plea for accessible libraries. Its demands have been fullfilled in part, and as far as public authority had office and function in the matter. But in part also the urgent counsel of the lecture has been absolutely contemned; for it represented to the hearers that inasmuch as life is very short, "and the quiet hours of it few," it is well to waste none of them in reading worthless books. Public libraries are increasing—not entirely in the sense in which Ruskin intended to commend them; for he wished Englishmen to be rather able to buy good books securely than to read them free of cost; yet in a very real sense treasuries have been stored for the use of the "quiet hours" of citizens. But it is evident that more of the quiet hours of this short life are wasted now in reading worthless books than when the remonstrance was spoken. The private following of Ruskin's teaching, however diligent it may have been with a few, separate and single, has been as nothing amongst the multitude of units. Corporately in municipal action, and obscurely in the practice of two or three—not joined together, but scattered out of sight—"Sesame" had its share of influence; but its appeal was to the private throng, thousands and millions, whose conduct of life is matter of their own multitudinous but solitary responsibility. And in this matter of idle reading, general opinion grows daily more relaxed. Ruskin would teach men to read; and from this long instruction, in which not a sentence is futile, I gather first the rebuke of that common appreciation, "How good this is—that's exactly what I think!" The right feeling is rather, "How strange that is! I never thought of that before, and yet I see it is true; or if I do not now, I hope I shall, some day." This is asking perhaps overmuch submission; and assuredly literature is a question, a recognition, a consultation, an evocation to the reader's spirit. *Il poeta mi disse: Che pense?* And what Virgil asked of his student, Dante, every poet asks of a young man. But Ruskin says, "Be sure that you go to the author to get at his meaning, not to find yours"; and that doubtless is the first step. Next the reader is bidden to look intently at words and to know their history. "Let the accent of words be watched, and closely: let their meaning be watched more closely still, and fewer will do the work. . . . There are masked words droning and skulking about us in Europe just now." How excellent a phrase! Ruskin is not of those who think English to be a fortunate language in that it has words of Greek and Latin derivation for august and awful things. He would have us transpose what we have so arbitrarily placed—"damn" and "condemn" by popular use, for example, and "Bible" and "book" by derivation. Nevertheless there might be much to be said on the other side. Quote the French Scriptures, in words that do journey-man's work—nay, worse, commercial work—in daily life, and see the loss. The world acquires and possesses a greater number of things—spiritual things—as it grows older; nobler its possessions may not be, but they are certainly more numerous; and England, among the nations of the world, is happy in the fact that she is able, better than the rest, to multiply names for these things by her power of giving to one word two forms. Has not Ruskin himself been able to think more remotely and more intellectually by means of the removed and immaterial Latin word of what he calls our "mongrel tongue"? No imaginative reader, however, and no reader who knows anything of Ruskin, will need to be told that when he would have us to counterchange "Bible" and "book," or any such words, he would add to the gravity of this word, not take away from the gravity of that. But no reader who knows anything of the world will need to be told that in effect the counterchange would add nothing to the gravity of one word and would take much from the gravity of the other.

As a lesson in the intent study of words, such as a great poet claims from his reader by his own weight of special purpose—the single stroke struck with single intention—Ruskin takes his hearers through the St. Peter passage of *Lycidas*. Every word has full audience, and makes an ample discharge of Milton's meaning at the assize of this solicitous judge. Nor may we complain that such separate audience resembles the judgment of one who would take a lens to look at a picture piecemeal. The particular verbal examination is entirely right, it answers immediately to a special claim of the poet in a special passage; anon he will relax his demands, and you the instance of your attention. And so does Holbein draw finely, intensely, and *much*, some passage of anatomical articulation, and then pass to a larger and slighter drawing of the laxer forms of flesh.

But the mournful point of this lecture on reading is that after all it is a lecture against reading. The lecturer himself must not follow his proper vocation —chiefly, he has said elsewhere, the outlining of primroses; because no savages are housed so ill as the poor of English towns, or die so lonely; and no man nor woman ought to follow the vocation of art or study until the lost were rescued and the names of the unknown written in a register open under the eyes of a responsible compassion. And even if it were fit that the arts should engross the human energy that is due to the tasks of succour, how should a covetous people read aright? With the love of money publicly confessed to be the motive of all action, the insanity of avarice is broadcast, and the insane are incapable of thought.

> "Happily our disease is, as yet, little worse than this incapacity of thought, . . . we are still industrious to the last hour of the day, though we add the gambler's fury to the labourer's patience; we are still brave to the death, though incapable of discerning the true cause for battle; and are still true in affection to our own flesh. . . . There is hope for

a nation while this can still be said of it. As long as it holds its life in its hand, ready to give it for its honour (though a foolish honour), for its love (though a selfish love), and for its business (though a base business), there is hope for it. But hope only; for this instinctive, reckless virtue cannot last."

On the last page, after the evil of privilege has been shown fully, broadly, and with the most impetuous will, the problem of privilege is touched where it lies, known to all men, awaiting some solution in the future, not always to make matter for the last of seventy pages:

"The principal question remains inexorable,— . . . which of us, in brief word, is to do the hard and dirty work for the rest—and for what pay? Who is to do the pleasant and clean work, and for what pay? . . . We live, we gentlemen, on delicatest prey, after the manner of weasels; . . . we keep a certain number of clowns digging and ditching, and generally stupefied, in order that we, being fed gratis, may have all the thinking and feeling to ourselves. . . . Yet . . . it is perhaps better to build a beautiful human creature than a beautiful dome or steeple, . . . only the beautiful human creature will have some duties to do in return."

It is of these duties that the second lecture, "Of Queens' Gardens," treats with singular beauty. The foregoing pages of the book as it stands had assuredly cast not only sudden lights upon the evil but black shadows upon the good of modern English life. Not a word, for instance, of the vast alms, of the private and voluntary but corporate service rendered to all kinds of distress, of the great socialistic confession of the theory of the Poor Law; not a word of any business that is not "base" or of any love that is not "selfish." But in "Lilies" the teaching is addressed particularly to women of a kind and class that acknowledge conscience and are concerned with private duty, though they can hardly be charged with an intellectual responsibility for the national condition. In effect, the examples proposed to them by Ruskin are those of heroines who have never questioned the privilege—moral, mental, bodily—into which they were born. Nor have the women addressed inquired into the conditions of their own privilege, even though they may vaguely avow that some obligations are implied by their unexplained "rights." In addressing women at all Ruskin tells us he had recourse to "faith"; it was a faith that could boast of no great foundation:

> "I wrote 'Lilies' to please one girl; and were it not for what I remember of her, and of few besides, should now recast some of the sentences. . . . The fashion of the time renders whatever is forward, coarse, or senseless, in feminine nature, too palpable to all men."

The "one girl" was the "Rosie" of *Præterita*, whom, child and woman, he had loved, and who was dead (1875) when he revised the pages written for her. As to the audience then left to him, he says that the picturesqueness of his earlier writings "had brought him acquainted with much of their emptiest enthusiasms"; and as to the failure of women in relation to his own life, "What I might have been so helped" [that is, helped by a woman] "I rarely indulge myself in the idleness of thinking."

He proposes examples of heroic nature, and the entirely heroic nature of the women of Shakespeare all worthy young readers will grant to Ruskin's lovely exposition. But they will assuredly boggle at a like ascription of honour to the women of Scott. These young creatures Scott made virtuous because convention required a virtuous maid for the hero to love, and made faultless, at a blow, because he could not be at the pains to work upon their characters. It is chilling to hear their intellect and tenderness praised in the noble terms that honour the intellect and tenderness of Imogen, Hermione, or Perdita, of a goddess, or of the fairy women of romance: "I would take Spenser, and show you how all his fairy knights are sometimes deceived and sometimes vanquished; but the soul of Una is never darkened, and the spear of Britomart is never broken."—"That Athena of the olive-helm and cloudy shield, to faith in whom you owe, down to this date, whatever you hold most precious in art, in literature, or in types of national virtue."

As for the education of the girl who is in England born into the inheritance of the privilege of what is—while the disinherited consent—her own place, Ruskin counsels what perhaps no one will question. She is to be trained in habits of accurate thought; she is to understand the meaning, the inevitableness, and the loveliness of natural laws; and to "follow at least some one path of scientific attainment as far as to the threshold of that bitter Valley of Humiliation into which only the wisest and bravest of men can descend, owning themselves for ever children, gathering pebbles on a boundless shore." To the girl herself Ruskin makes a passionate appeal. To no one, to no class, has he spoken words more urgent, more hardly wrung from his profound distress and desire on behalf of mankind. The criminal is beyond reach, in the grip of circumstance and of passion; the political economist is, according to Ruskin, teaching his own different lesson; the soldier is under another obedience; the man is indocile. But here, in the nation, is the girl, for a score of reasons accessible and profitable. Against her sins there is no legislation, against her destructiveness no national protest, no public opinion against her cruelty. In *Sesame and Lilies* she learns that she must not be cruel, and that she must not be idle—that her idleness cannot but be cruel; at her disposal is the awful force of the negation of good. He, who does not wonder at the death of the miser, at the life of the sensualist, at the frenzy of nations, at the crimes of kings, does wonder at the lack of mercy in the heart of a fortunate woman. He would persuade her to make garments for the poor and to give alms, not to eat her bread in idleness, not to waste it; to live and care for no flowers until she shall have rescued the withering flowers of miserable childhood:

"Did you ever hear, not of a Maud but a Madeleine, who went down to her garden in the dawn, and found One waiting at the gate, whom she supposed to be the gardener?"

The third and last lecture bound in this volume—"The Mystery of Life and its Arts," delivered in Dublin in 1868—has near its opening this passage:

"I have had what, in many respects, I boldly call the misfortune, to set my words somewhat prettily together; not without a foolish vanity in the poor knack I had of doing so; until I was heavily punished for this pride, by finding that many people thought of the words only, and cared nothing for the meaning."

A little further is this:

"I spent the ten strongest years of my life (from twenty to thirty) in endeavouring to show the excellence of the work of the man whom I believed, and rightly believed, to be the greatest painter of the schools of England since Reynolds. I had then perfect faith in the power of every great truth or beauty to prevail ultimately. . . . Fortunately or unfortunately, an opportunity of perfect trial undeceived me at once and forever."

Ruskin found that the Turner drawings arranged by him for exhibition were the object of absolute public neglect. He saw that his ten years had been lost.

"For that I did not much care; I had, at least, learned my own business thoroughly. . . . But what I did care for was the—to me frightful—discovery, that the most splendid genius in the arts might be permitted by Providence to labour and perish uselessly, . . . that the glory of it was perishable as well as invisible. That was the first mystery of life to me."

The reader will remember that Turner's pictures were not only neglected by men, but also irreparably injured and altered by time; to witness this was to endure the chastisement of a hope whereof few men are capable. Surely it is no obscure sign of greatness in a soul—that it should have hoped so much. Ninety and nine are they who need no repentance, having not committed the sin of going thus in front of the judgments of Heaven—heralds—and have not been called back to rebuke as was this one. In what has so often been called the dogmatism of Ruskin's work appears this all-noble fault.

Upon the discovery of this mystery crowd all the mysteries. Who that has suffered one but has also soon suffered all? In this great lecture Ruskin confesses them one by one, in extremities of soul. And he is aghast at the indifference not of the vulgar only, but of poets. The seers themselves have paltered with the faculty of sight. Milton's history of the fall of the angels is unbelievable to himself, told with artifice and invention, not a living truth presented to living faith, nor told as he must answer it in the last judgment of the intellectual conscience.

"Dante's conception is far more intense, and by himself for the time, not to be escaped from; it is indeed a vision, but a vision only. . . . And the destinies of the Christian Church, under their most sacred symbols, become literally subordinate to the praise, and are only to be understood by the aid, of one dear Florentine maiden. . . . It seems daily more amazing to me that men such as these should dare to . . . fill the openings of eternity, before which prophets have veiled their faces, . . . with idle puppets of their scholastic imagination, and melancholy lights of frantic faith in their lost mortal love."

The indifference of the world as to the infinite question of religion, the indifference of all mankind as to the purpose of its little life, of every man as to the effect of his little life—in an evil hour these puzzles throng the way to the recesses of thought. As it chanced, with the irony of things, Ruskin had been bidden to avoid religious questions in Dublin for fear of offending some of his hearers. What he had been moved to say, however, he thought would offend all if it offended any, and not in Dublin only but in the breadth and in the corners of the world. But as his audience expected to hear about "art," and not about the mysteries of life, he closes the lecture in his old manner, with all the splendid confidence of teaching, demonstrating the cause of the good fortune of this art and of the disaster of that, putting away once more what he confessed to be the unanswerable, for the exposition of what he held to be the answerable, question. In a delightful passage (what wonder that his hearers wanted to hear it?) he recurs to the contrast of the Lombardic Eve—the barbarous carving that had a future, with the Angel (it was an Irish angel, by the way), the barbarous design that had no possible artistic future and was the end of its own futile attempt; these had been described in *The Two Paths*. Here is Ruskin leaving the Mystery for the lesson. But, strange to say, if ever he has explained in vain, registered an inconsequence, committed himself to failure, it has been in the generous cause of possible rescue—it has been in the Lesson.

CHAPTER XV

"THE CROWN OF WILD OLIVE" (1866)

WHETHER the four lectures published under this title chanced to be written at a time of interior weakness I know not; but at least two of them bear such signs of flagging life as are not to be found elsewhere. Alike in gentleness, in play, in gravity, and in violence—in exaggeration itself, which wastes the life of all other writers—Ruskin has an incomparable vitality; and it is not too much to say that, amongst these many books, only in the lecture on "War" is the place of this vitality taken by vivacity and excitement; but the following lecture, "The Future of England," seems also to show signs of the spur. Both lectures were given at Woolwich—the one at the Royal Military Academy, and the other at the Royal Artillery Institution, with four years between. Ruskin had been asked, not once or twice, to speak to the young soldier, and had "not ventured persistently to refuse"; and perhaps the knowledge that he had a paradox before him caused him to make the paradox a sort of impossibility, in very despair. Accordingly we have it: "All the pure and noble arts of peace are founded on war"; "No great art ever yet arose on earth, but among a nation of soldiers"; "There is no art among a shepherd people, if it remains at peace"; "There is no great art possible to a nation but that which is based on battle." The reader is almost able to imagine for himself how Ruskin opposes these assertions by condemnations of the contentious temper of man who, set to dress and to keep his garden, delighted to trample it in quarrel. The opposition is violent enough, but there is, for once, a lack of passion. Not so when war ceases to be directly the theme, and Ruskin approaches once more the intricate but more accessible question of public economy:

> "You object, Lords of England, to increase, to the poor, the wages you give them, because they spend them, you say, unadvisedly. Render them, therefore, an account of the wages which *they* give *you;* and show them, by your example, how to spend theirs to the last farthing, advisedly."

He had just then heard of working men who spent their wages in the brief time of prosperity "by sitting two days a-week in the tavern parlour, ladling port wine, not out of bowls, but out of buckets"; and he remembered the example set to them at his own first college supper.

The two other lectures are on "Work" and "Traffic," and the first was for a Working Men's Institute. The main matter treated is the appointment made by capital of the kind and the object of labour. No other operation of capital—not even the paying of wages—is so momentous as this for the interests of the labouring class; Ruskin accuses the writers on political economy of neglecting its importance, but I think that Mill has sufficiently marked it, in his own way. The difference between Ruskin and the others is probably that he sees waste, inutility, and mischief where others, beguiled of their clear perceptions by commercial (or non-political) economy, were not aware of it: in iron railings, for example, set up before a new public-house:

> "The front of it was built in so wise manner, that a recess of two feet was left below its front windows, between them and the street-pavement; a recess too narrow for any possible use (for even if it had been occupied by a seat, as in old time it might have been, everybody walking along the street would have fallen over the legs of the reposing wayfarer). But, by way of making this two feet depth of freehold land more expressive of the dignity of an establishment for the sale of spirituous liquors, it was fenced from the pavement by an imposing iron railing, having four or five spear-heads to the yard of it, and six feet high; containing as much iron and iron-work, indeed, as could well be put into the space; and by this stately arrangement, the little piece of dead ground within . . . became a protective receptacle of refuse."

It was only Ruskin who saw this work to be impoverishing; and hard by this Croydon railing was the once sweet stream at Carshalton, full of festering refuse that a little natural labour would have cleared. Food, fresh air, and pure water brought about by labour are so much gain to the nation—a political possession—even if the labour spent on them be ill paid.

The lecture on "Traffic" was given in the Bradford Town Hall on the eve of the building of a new Exchange. "I do not care about this Exchange," said the lecturer, "because *you* don't."

> "You know there are a great many odd styles of architecture about; you don't want to do anything ridiculous; you hear of me, among others, as a respectable architectural man-milliner, and you send for me."

His hope was to teach his hearers to like something, and to build what they could like. "The first and last, and closest trial question to any living creature is 'What do you like?' . . . Taste is not only a part and an index of morality;—it is the *only* morality."

CHAPTER XVI

"TIME AND TIDE BY WEARE AND TYNE" (1867)

THE years 1866 and 1867 are famous in the history of self-government in England. The agitator and the legislator, this party and that, vied amongst themselves for a place not in the vanward and the rearward, but both in the vanward. Democracy gained ground that would not have been yielded to it without the slight quibble of altered names. At any rate it was in 1866 that the two parties began to intersect one another at various points, and the intersections took names. The great two parties of political history were virtually confusible; somewhat like the little animals, one implacental and the other placental, and therefore derived by descent through ways that lay apart for incalculable years, yet so like each other in shape, habit, and feature that to see them run in the fields you cannot tell them apart. Everything then became technically political; politics became a matter not of principle but of terminology; and amid the arbitrary passion about words, Ruskin wrote his twenty-five letters to a workingman of Sunderland on the Laws of Work, to which he gave the aforesaid title, and which were intended to teach realities. Ruskin himself at times used the names of parties, calling himself a Tory or what not. But the writer of *Time and Tide* is one who warns Tory and Radical alike against the illusion of outward liberty, and enforces the necessity of inward law first, and of outward law secondly, to execute the first. Freedom from covetousness, freedom from luxury, protection from cruelty—Ruskin would ensure these with so much force that standing somewhere between the extremity of socialism on the one hand and the extremity of anarchism on the other, it would certainly be to socialists that he would seem to be gathered. Nevertheless, though the socialist might quote *Time and Tide* in favour of licences to marry, yet the anarchist might cite the same book against the army estimates.

It is in this little volume, written when men—at a time of political revision—were not ashamed to make fresh plans (called Utopias in the language of the newspaper) for society, that Ruskin has given himself the greatest freedom of proposal. That is, he takes, for all his sad heart, something of the pleasure of a child planning the laws and economies of its own island in the Pacific Ocean. There is an ingenious interest in the work, and withal a profound conviction of the wisdom of what seems so visionary. It is needless to say that a proposal to give young men and rosières a licence to marry when they deserved it received from the world the derision that costs nothing—not even the pains of reading the book. The book, indeed, is full rather of desires than of hopes, and its dejection is almost as great as that manifest in the most decoratively beautiful of Ruskin's writings—*Sesame and Lilies.* He was not able to acquiesce in the sufferings of cities. He was obliged to try to think for the foolish and work for the helpless, and to give to the disinherited. He was not able, besides, to acquiesce in the profanations.

> "The action of the deceiving or devilish power is in *nothing* shown quite so distinctly among us at this day—not even in our commercial dishonesties, nor in our social cruelties—as in its having been able to take away music, as an instrument of education, altogether; and to enlist it wholly in the service of superstition on the one hand, and of sensuality on the other."

It is right that I should quote this unjust passage. In 1867 the intellectual and spiritual education of thousands of Englishmen by the greatest music in the world may not have made great progress; but even at that time Ruskin, if he had looked, might have seen multitudes of people studying music neither for superstition nor for sensuality; the citizens at the familiar popular concerts were then beginning, with the most willing hearts ever brought to the hearing of good music, their education at no ignoble hands. The page that describes a stage-burlesque of that day (it would only need to be made more contemptuous for this) is written with such strange felicity as Ruskin uses when, with much feeling, he writes lightly :

> "The pantomime was *Ali Bada and the Forty Thieves.* The forty thieves were girls. The forty thieves had forty companions, who were girls. The forty thieves and their forty companions were in some way mixed up with about four hundred and forty fairies, who were girls. There was an Oxford and Cambridge, in which the Oxford and Cambridge men

were girls. . . . Mingled incongruously with these seraphic, and as far as my boyish experience extends, novel elements of pantomime, there were yet some of its old and fast-expiring elements. There were, in speciality, two thoroughly good pantomime actors, Mr. W. H. Payne and Mr. Frederick Payne. . . . There were two subordinate actors, who played, subordinately well, the fore and hind legs of a donkey. And there was a little actress, of whom I have chiefly to speak, who played exquisitely the little part she had to play. The scene in which she appeared was . . . the house scene, in which Ali Baba's wife, on washing day, is called upon by the butcher, baker, and milkman, with unpaid bills; and in the extremity of her distress hears her husband's knock at the door and opens it for him to drive in his donkey, laden with gold. The children . . . presently share in the rapture of their father and mother; and the little lady I spoke of—eight or nine years old—dances a *pas de deux* with the donkey. She did it beautifully and simply, as a child ought to dance. She was not an infant prodigy; there was no evidence, in the finish or strength of her motion, that she had been put to continual torture through half her eight or nine years. She did nothing more than any child, well taught, but painlessly, might easily do. She caricatured no older person—attempted no curious or fantastic skill. She was dressed decently—she moved decently—she looked and behaved innocently—and she danced her joyful dance with perfect grace, spirit, sweetness, and self-forgetfulness. And through all the vast theatre, full of English fathers and mothers and children, there was not one hand lifted to give her sign of praise but mine. Presently after this came on the forty thieves, who, as I told you, were girls; and, there being no thieving to be presently done, and time hanging heavy on their hands, arms, and legs, the forty thief-girls proceeded to light forty cigars, whereupon the British public give them a round of applause. Whereupon I fell a-thinking; and saw little more of the piece, except as an ugly and disturbing dream."

I recur elsewhere to the saddest page Ruskin ever wrote (and perhaps in writing it he did not think how some few of his readers would share with him its last bitterness) wherein he avers that he has at last learnt to be cheerful and to rest in spite of the starving and dying of the forlorn, and notwithstanding the disregard with which the world had let go by his courageous plan of succour. But in 1867 there was no such despair, but much distress and desire, in that generous heart. He still thought that there were many who would defer the arts, the muses, the luxuries, the graces of civilization, the tasks of intellect, and the accomplishment of nations, until a rescue had been made of the poor. At the time of writing *Time and Tide* the author had the large desire of saving the labouring classes from what Antiquity and the modern world alike have held to be the misfortune and servitude of labour. But he found himself, needless to say, with the unvanquished difficulty of the necessity of some such servitude. With a laugh he asks the professors of Evangelical Christianity—especially the ministers—whether they will not purchase their own proclaimed eternal reward by taking upon themselves the disgrace of the unattractive offices. There seems no other way to fill them in the nation as he would reconstruct it. He sets about the work of reconstruction ingeniously, with wisdom, and like a child:

> "You say that many a boy runs away . . . from good positions to go to sea. Of course he does. I never said I should have any difficulty in finding sailors, but that I shall in finding fishmongers. I am not at a loss for gardeners either, but what am I to do for greengrocers?"

It is chiefly to serve the study of profits, fair and unfair, that *Time and Tide* was written; but amongst its many other purposes was that reunion of art and handicraft for which Ruskin worked in those days alone, and to further which, as also to rebuke luxury, he wrote:

> "Labour without joy is base. Labour without sorrow is base. Sorrow without labour is base. Joy without labour is base."

CHAPTER XVII

"THE QUEEN OF THE AIR" (1869)

RUSKIN called this book a study of the Greek myths of cloud and storm, but no more than a prefatory study—a collection of "desultory memoranda on a most noble subject." The myth of Athena, his Queen of the Air, he names one of "the great myths," or those as to which it is of small importance "what wild hunter dreamed, or what childish race first dreaded it," because one thing is certain—that a "strong people" lived by it. The myth of St. George is of the same influential and significant kind. But this Queen of the Air is queen also of the breathing creatures of earth, queen of human breath, and of the moral health and "habitual wisdom" of the unaffrighted Grecian heart. Queen of the blue air, first of all; and in the Introduction Ruskin appeals once more to a world busied upon the defilement of so much of the celestial blue, but at that moment greatly interested in Professor Tyndall's discovery of the cause of the colour of the sky—researches for which Ruskin thanks the professor, with a gentle apology for any words of his that had seemed to fail in respect for the powers of thought of the masters of modern physical science.

"This first day of May, 1869, I am writing where

> my work was begun thirty-five years ago,—within sight of the snows of the higher Alps. In that half of the permitted life of man, I have seen strange evil brought upon every scene that I best loved. . . . The light that once flushed those pale summits with its rose at dawn, and purple at sunset, is now umbered and faint; the air which once inlaid the clefts of all their golden crags with azure is now defiled with languid coils of smoke; . . . the waters that once sank at their feet into crystalline rest are now dimmed and foul."

Is there any reader inclined to take this for a light grief? I protest that it is a heavy one.

The Athena of the clear heavens was the theme of the greatest myth in that central time—about 500 B. C.—which held more explicitly and with fuller consciousness the early religion of the Homeric day.

> "The Homeric poems . . . are not conceived didactically, but are didactic in their essence, as all good art is. There is an increasing insensibility to this character, and even an open denial of it, among us, now, which is one of the most curious errors of modernism,—the peculiar and judicial blindness of an age which, having long practiced art and poetry for the sake of pleasure only, has become incapable of reading their language when they were both didactic: and also, having been itself accustomed to a professedly didactic teaching which yet, for private interests, studiously avoids collision with every prevalent vice of its day (and especially with avarice), has become equally dead to the intensely ethical conceptions of a race which habitually divided all men into two broad classes of worthy or worthless;—good, and good for nothing."

Ruskin would teach this Greek spirit again to a world that had boasted of denying it; but before the formative and decisive spirit of Athena is shown centred in the heart and work of men, Ruskin studies it "in the heavens," and "in the earth." Athena represents "all cloud, and rain, and dew, and darkness, and peace, and wrath of heaven." She represents the vegetative power of the earth, the motion of sea and of ships, the vibration of sound. To her great myth, therefore, Ruskin devotes a beautiful page regarding flowers, a doubtful page regarding music, and one of great vigour regarding the strength that is rather in breath than muscle—the young strength in war, wherewith Athena filled the breast of Achilles when "She leaped down out of heaven like a harpy falcon, shrill-voiced." And this follows, on the creature that lives and moves by air—the bird:

> "It is little more than a drift of the air brought into form by plumes; the air is in all its quills, it breathes through its whole frame and flesh, and glows with air in its flying, like a blown flame: it rests upon the air, subdues it, surpasses it, outraces it;—it *is* the air, conscious of itself, conquering itself, ruling itself."

The voice of Athena's air is in the bird's throat:

> "As we may imagine the wild form of the cloud closed into the perfect form of the bird's wings, so the wild voice of the cloud into its ordered and commanded voice. . . . Also upon the plumes of the bird are put the colours of the air: on these the gold of the cloud, that cannot be gathered by covet-

> ousness; the rubies of the clouds, that are not the price of Athena, but *are* Athena; the vermilion of the cloud-bar and the flame of the cloud-crest, and the snow of the cloud, and its shadow, and the melted blue of the deep wells of the sky."

As the bird has most of the life of air, the serpent has least; and the serpent is one of the dark sayings of nature—the invariable living hieroglyph, worth the reading.

"Athena in the Heart" is rather a reading by insight of the Greek mind than a tracing of Greek records. Ruskin has sought that mind "through the imperfection, and alas! more dimly yet, through the triumphs, of formative art." He finds Athena in that early creative power—we may name it the mother of art that dies in childbirth.

> "It is as vain an attempt to reason out the visionary power or guiding influence of Athena in the Greek heart, from anything we now read, or possess, of the work of Phidias, as it would be for the disciples of some new religion to infer the spirit of Christianity from Titian's 'Assumption.'"

But in the days of art, Athena teaches "rightness." Every reader of Ruskin knows well what he means by this. Rightness is in the nature of the workman—his spirit and his style.

> "If stone-work is well put together, it means that a thoughtful man planned it, and a careful man cut it. . . . A man may hide himself from you, or misrepresent himself to you, every other way; but he

cannot in his work: there, be sure, you have him to the inmost."

The command of Athena which is the command of rightness antecedent to beauty is spoken thus:

"'Be well exercised, and rightly clothed. Clothed, and in your right minds; not insane and in rags, nor in soiled fine clothes clutched from each other's shoulders. Fight and weave. Then I myself will answer for the course of the lance, and the colours of the loom.'"

Ruskin renews, upon this text, his warning to a society that sets machines to fight and weave whilst men are obliged to stand idle. All vital power, he holds, should be employed first, natural mechanical force secondly, and artificially produced mechanical force only in the third place. "We waste our coal, and spoil our humanity, at one and the same time." Athena, finally, represents restraint:

"No one ever gets wiser by doing wrong, nor stronger. You will get wiser and stronger only by doing right. . . . 'What!' a wayward youth might perhaps answer . . . 'Shall I not know the world best by trying the wrong of it, and repenting?' . . . Your liberty of choice has simply destroyed for you so much life and strength, never regainable. It is true you now know the habits of swine, and the taste of husks: do you think your father could not have taught you to know better habits and pleasanter tastes?"

CHAPTER XVIII

"LECTURES ON ART" (1870)

THE first course of Slade Lectures begins with some formality and a sense of the novelty and solemnity of the lecturer's office. The first of the six goes to the beginning of things, and has this sharp phrase on education: it is "not the equaliser, but the discoverer, of men," and,

> "So far from being instruments for the collection of riches, the first lesson of wisdom is to disdain them, and of gentleness, to diffuse."

The technical education proposed by Ruskin is not to enable a man here and there to extricate himself from a crowd "confessed to be in evil case," but to make the case of the crowd more honourable. Art may be mingled with their toil, but on this point a modest expectation is proposed. Let us not hope, says Ruskin in 1870, to excel—not even in the merest decoration.

> "No nation ever had, or will have, the power of suddenly developing, under the pressure of necessity, faculties it had neglected when it was at ease."

He closes against his countrymen "the highest fields of ideal art," but strangely confounds himself and voids his own argument when he closes those fields of art for reasons that would avail equally to shut the gates of "the highest fields" of ideal literature. He finds in the English genius (and so proper thereto that the lack, in an Englishman, implies some failure or weakness) a pleasure in the grotesque, and a tolerance of certain gross forms of evil. Let us grant to Ruskin that it is there; we would go further and grant to him that because of it Englishmen cannot be the greatest painters, if that concession did not bind us to the absurdity that because of it Englishmen cannot be the greatest writers. As it is, the theory cannot stand. Judged by comparison with Dante, we may be, if Ruskin will, a coarse nation; but in that case a coarse nation owns one name certainly greater than Dante's. Surely because of his terrible custom of referring the human spirit to Dante, and of testing human character by the rule of Dante's, does Ruskin commit this outrage.

He offers his countrymen some comfort; if they cannot paint the greatest pictures, they can, in the persons of Reynolds and Gainsborough, paint portraits insuperably good (but in the second lecture he says, "The highest that art can do is to set before you the true image of the presence of a noble human being"); they can love and study landscape by the very fact that they are unhappily a city folk, whereas the peasant cares little for natural beauty; and they have a national sympathy with animals; let them improve it and learn to draw birds rather than shoot them. And there follows a beautiful passage on the inheritance of a love of beauty:

> "In the children of noble races, trained by surrounding art, and at the same time in the practice of great deeds, there is an intense delight in the landscape of their country, as *memorial;* a sense not taught to them, nor teachable to any others; but, in them, innate; and the seal and reward of persistence in great national life;—the obedience and the peace of ages having extended gradually the glory of the revered ancestors also to the ancestral land; until the Motherhood of the dust, the mystery of the Demeter from whose bosom we came, and to whose bosom we return, surrounds and inspires, everywhere, the local awe of field and fountain."

The students, discouraged, one must suppose, by the inaugural lecture, were instructed, in the second, on "The Relation of Art to Religion."

> "The phenomena of imagination . . . are the result of the influence of the common and vital, but not, therefore, less Divine, spirit, of which some portion is given to all living creatures in such manner as may be adapted to their rank in creation; . . . and everything which men rightly accomplish is indeed done by Divine help, but under a consistent law which is never departed from."

"The Relation of Art to Morals" is the subject of a lecture contrasting once more the thought of Antiquity and of the modern world. It seems to the careful reader that if Ruskin tests art by morality, he also tests morality by art. One page of this lecture puts life to the touch with a trial like that of Mr. Meredith's test in *The Empty Purse:*

"Is it accepted of song?"

"No art-teaching," says Ruskin in the same lecture, "could be of use to you, but would rather be harmful, unless it was grafted on something deeper than all art." But we have heard him say elsewhere that taste is the only morality—that is to say, what a man loves is his spiritual life. Whichever of these two answers for the other—whether morality for such art as it is able to teach, or art for such morality as it is able to teach—by neither, nor by both, in those elementary measures, are men led many paces on the way they must walk. The *fact* of morality may be established by art, but the code of morality whereby we have to control our actions and to constrain ourselves has that fact as its starting point, and does its effectual work further on. Ruskin, however, seems to hold that a working morality is to be found in the decisions of art. Leaving these polemics, the reader stops with full assent upon this incidental judgment of language and literature:

> "The chief vices of education have arisen from the one great fallacy of supposing that noble language is a communicable trick of grammar and accent, instead of simply the careful expression of right thought."

It is certainly not a communicable trick, but neither is it a communicable virtue. The following is one of the finest of many passages condemning modern conditions:

> "Great obscurity . . . has been brought upon the truth . . . by the want of integrity and simplicity in our modern life. Everything is broken up, . . . besides being in great part imitative; so that

you not only cannot tell what a man is, but sometimes you cannot tell whether he *is*, at all."

Amongst other things we fail in is anger when it is due; Ruskin will not away with our non-vindictive justice, which, having convicted a man of a crime worthy of death, entirely pardons the criminal, restores him to honour and esteem, and then hangs him; "not as a malefactor, but as a scarecrow."

"That is the theory. And the practice is, that we send a child to prison for a month for stealing a handful of walnuts, for fear that other children should come to steal more of our walnuts. And we do not punish a swindler for ruining a thousand families, because we think swindling a wholesome excitement to trade."

Ruskin will have justice to be vindictive and punishment retributive.

In "The Relation of Art to Use," we read, "The entire vitality of art depends upon its being either full of truth or full of use." It is "either to state a true thing or to adorn a serviceable one. It must never exist alone—never for itself." The very commonplace of later, but not latest, opinion is to the contrary. I confess that "to state a true thing" is a definition of purpose against which there may be some rebellion even in a mind never subject to the fashion of a now departing day. Here, as before, such a mind may appeal, against Ruskin's phrase, to the separate art of music. "To make a beautiful thing" is not, however, a sufficient amendment of that phrase, in as much as "the formation of an actually beautiful thing" is involved by Ruskin in the act of art. One thing is certain—that it is not by way of dishonour to art that he would have art subservient, but for the advantage of its essential vitality and of its particular skill. Of vitality he is the best judge in the world. Of human skill he charges the whole world of these three hundred years past with taking not too much but too little heed.

> "We have lost our delight in Skill; in that majesty of it . . . which long ago I tried to express, under the head of 'ideas of power.' . . . All the joy and reverence we ought to feel in looking at a strong man's work have ceased in us. We keep them yet a little in looking at a honeycomb or a bird's nest; we understand that these differ, by divinity of skill, from a lump of wax or a cluster of sticks."

It is in the lecture on the relation of art to use, moreover, that the reader finds this splendid passage on Reynolds:

> "He rejoices in showing you his skill; and those of you who succeed in learning what painter's work really is, will one day rejoice also, even to laughter—that highest laughter which springs of pure delight, in watching the fortitude and fire of a hand which strikes forth its will upon the canvas as easily as the wind strikes it on the sea. He rejoices in all abstract beauty and rhythm and melody of design."

But the beauty is to serve by likeness to nature. This "likeness" seems to be rather a strain of the idea of "use." And in fact to prove this curious contention Ruskin is obliged to place portrait at a height, as has already been said, that he had seemed to deny it. But in the course of this argument is a brilliant page on the cause of the dishonour of portraiture in Greek art:

> "The progressive course of Greek art was in subduing monstrous conceptions to natural ones; it did this by general laws; it reached absolute truth of generic human form, and if this ethical force had remained, would have advanced into healthy portraiture. But at the moment of change the national life ended in Greece; and portraiture, there, meant insult to her religion, and flattery to her tyrants. And her skill perished, not because she became true in sight, but because she became vile in heart."

But these moralities and portraitures are but obscure glories of art in use (as to which the reader may be half-convinced, or may hold that they are concerned rather with the sense of words than with principles of art) compared with the kinds of plain and obvious utility to which, in the beginning of this course, as in the pamphlet on *Pre-Raphaelitism*, Ruskin commends the services of painters:

> "What we especially need at present for educational purposes is to know, not the anatomy of plants, but their biography—how and where they live and die, their tempers, benevolences, malignities, distresses, and virtues. We want them drawn from their youth to their age, from bud to fruit. . . . And all this we ought to have drawn so accurately that we might at once compare any given part of a plant with the same part of any other, drawn on the like conditions.

> Now, is not this a work which we may set about here in Oxford, with good hope and much pleasure?"

Not many thought so, it is said. The professor's classes were not well attended. He went on to suggest that geology should be served, as well as botany, and urged his art students to the study of the cleavage-lines of the smallest fragments of rock. To the rescue of topography, and zoology, and history they might go too:

> "The feudal and monastic buildings of Europe, and still more the streets of her ancient cities, are vanishing like dreams; and it is difficult to imagine the mingled envy and contempt with which future generations will look back to us, who still possessed such things, yet made no effort to preserve, and scarcely any to delineate them; for, when used as material of landscape by the modern artist, they are nearly always superficially or flatteringly represented, without zeal enough to penetrate their character, or patience enough to render it in modest harmony."

Ruskin appeals to those professing to love art that they would labour to "get the country clean and the people lovely," to rescue young creatures from miserable toil and deadly shade, to dress them better, to lodge them more fitly, to restore the handicrafts to dignity and simplicity. But the reform of outward conditions must come first, and Ruskin thought that art could hardly flourish

> "In any country where the cities are thus built, or thus, let me rather say, clotted and coagulated; spots

of dreadful mildew spreading by patches and blotches over the country they consume."

It is a repetition of the old contention, made doubtful by history as Ruskin himself tells it; for whenever art has begun to decay it has been surrounded, in that hour, by fulness of beauty.

The fourth lecture is a practical lesson on "Line"—that outline which is "infinitely subtle; not even a line, but the place of a line, and that, also, made soft by texture." The linear arts are the earliest, and they divide principally into the Greek (line with light) and the Gothic (line with colour). Ruskin shows how these arts began to cease to depend upon line, and learnt to represent masses, and how from them were derived

> "Two vast mediæval schools; one of flat and infinitely varied colour, with exquisite character and sentiment added, . . . but little perception of shadow; the other, of light and shade, with exquisite drawing of solid form, and little perception of colour; sometimes as little of sentiment."

According to Ruskin, the schools of colour enriched themselves by adopting from the schools of light and shadow "whatever was compatible with their own power." The schools of light and shadow, on the other hand, were too haughty and too weak to learn much from the schools of colour. To them is chiefly due the decadence of art. "In their fall they dragged the schools of colour down with them." Returning to the study of line, Ruskin recommends severity in drawing as a first aim, rather than the finished studies of light and shade practised in some of our classes. In the following lecture, on "Light," and in the last, on "Colour," he insists further upon the happiness and peace of the art of colour, and upon the oppression and mortality of the art of chiaroscuro—the art that sought light and found darkness also, and loved form and found formlessness.

> "The school of light is founded in the Doric worship of Apollo and the Ionic worship of Athena, as the spirits of life in the light, and of light in the air, opposed each to their own contrary deity of death—Apollo to the Python, Athena to the Gorgon—Apollo as life in light, to the earth spirit of corruption in darkness, Athena as life by motion, to the Gorgon spirit of death by pause, freezing, or turning to stone; both of the great divinities taking their glory from the evil they have conquered; both of them, when angry, taking to men the form of the evil which is their opposite. . . . But underlying both these, and far more mysterious, dreadful, and yet beautiful, there is the Greek conception of spiritual darkness; of the anger of fate, whether foredoomed or avenging."

Ruskin then takes us through the allegory (not the representation) of light in the Greek vase-paintings, and closes his history of light with the illumination of the work of Turner. To the student it must seem somewhat fantastic to call the schools of light and shadow Greek, for the sake of those allegories of light in Greek art—to call, for example, the northern spirit of the "Melancholia" and "The Knight and Death" Greek. But the student of Ruskin will retain, at any rate, the fact that he holds the colour-schools—the Gothic—to be the more vital, and the chiaroscuro schools, albeit noble in noble masters, to be subject to derogation in "licentious and vulgar forms of art" having no parallel amongst the colourists. Incidentally I must avow that amongst the griefs that a reader of Ruskin has to swallow is the contempt of reflected lights that is but the outcome of his suspicion and distrust of the schools of light and shadow. He bids his classes to make little inquiry into reflected lights:

> "Nearly all young students (and too many advanced masters) exaggerate them. . . . In vulgar chiaroscuro the shades are so full of reflection that they look as if some one had been walking round the object with a candle, and the students, by that help, peering into its crannies."

Ruskin never really loved the landscape of the south. In a letter (I think to Miss Siddal) he agrees with her that the Mediterranean coast lacks beauty because it is too pale. Now, that paleness is due to the reflected light in shadow which is the loveliest secret of the southern summer, and the surprise of the East; a secret and a surprise (although it makes all inner places tenderly bright), because the traveller expects, on the contrary, that shadows shall be dark in a bright sun, and often expects black shadows so positively that he goes further, and describes them.

Ruskin here, as elsewhere, recommends the student not to disregard local colour even in studies of form—not to ignore the leopard's spots for the sake of the lights or darks that are to aid in showing its anatomy. He would have the artist " to consider all nature merely as a mosaic of different colours, to be imitated one by one, in simplicity." In teaching the practice of the colourist painters he insists that " shadows are as much colours as lights are " ; and that " whoever represents them by merely the subdued or darkened tint of the light, represents them falsely." In *Modern Painters* Cuyp and others seemed to be rebuked for the separate colour of their shadows; we must understand false separate colour, no doubt; in any case we may settle our difficulties of theory by referring to the Venetian practice, which Ruskin pronounces to be right, and right in all periods. In 1870 Ruskin had perhaps already begun to repent of that Renaissance wherewith I venture to charge him in the chapter on *St. Mark's Rest;* and amongst those periods of Venetian " rightness," he was inclining to the tranquil and undazzled cheerfulness of the earlier colourists. " None of their lights are flashing, . . . they are soft, winning, precious; only, you know, on this condition they cannot have sunshine." In our eyes to-day the attaining to sunshine is worth the sacrifice of every lesser " cheerfulness," and of colour itself. And Titian and Tintoretto themselves thought so, and Ruskin himself must have thought so when he was at the height of his love for them, and for Turner. Even in 1870 he writes, nobly:

" We do not live in the inside of a pearl; but in an atmosphere through which a burning sun shines thwartedly, and over which a sorrowful night must far prevail. . . . There is mystery in the day as in the night."

Writing thus, he had not yet given his heart to the unmysterious allegory of early art. But how strange an injustice he could do at this time, and perhaps at all times, to that divine creation, "artificial" light, may be seen from this. The noble men, he says, of the sixteenth century learn their lesson from the schools of chiaroscuro nobly; the base men learn it basely.

> "The great men rise from colour to sunlight. The base ones fall from colour to candlelight. To-day 'non ragioniam di lor.'"

What, then, about Sir Joshua? As for the much more modern art which studies fire in daylight, and that which is dazzled by the flashes of day, they do not exist for Ruskin.

Broadly, he names the Gothic school of colour "the school of crystal" (and strangely, too, for the colours of crystal and of glass are colours through which light comes, and are surely unlike the colours of the primitive colour-schools); and the Greek school of light he names "the school of clay: potter's clay, and human, are too sorrowfully the same, as far as art is concerned." And he tells his classes that they must choose between the two, and cannot belong to both. None the less had he shown, in many an elaborate lesson, that the great Venetians had joined form and light to their colour, and that they did belong to both. And it is another surprise to find him declaring himself “ wholly ” a chiaroscurist. He had taught, in these same lectures, the colourists to be more “ vital,” and had recommended to the student the “ mosaic ” of the colour of nature ; he had disclaimed the chiaroscurists in *Modern Painters*, and in the later studies of Florentine art was to proclaim himself a colourist, as it would seem, “ wholly.” If there is an inconsistency, it is perhaps due to the theoretic separation of things long joined together ; but the matter is full of difficulty to the reader. At any rate, Ruskin must needs give his Turner the names of both schools. And having a living imagination for the art of action (indeed what imagination ever lived so fully as his ?) he insists that action was, according to the divisions of this book, “ Greek,” not “ Gothic.” Yet here again what contradictions, when we call to mind the action and flight of Gothic architecture, the growing plant in stone, the “ prickly independence ” of the leaf of Gothic sculpture, and the repose of Grecian building !

The lecture closes with a sombre encouragement :

> “ You live in an age of base conceit and baser servility—an age whose intellect is chiefly formed by pillage, and occupied in desecration ; one day mimicking, the next destroying, the works of all the noble persons who made its intellectual or art life possible to it. . . . In the midst of all this you have to become lowly and strong.”

CHAPTER XIX

"ARATRA PENTELICI" (1872)

This course of Slade Lectures treats of the Elements of Sculpture. At setting forth Ruskin condemns the lifeless work of cutting and chiselling jewels, in as much as true goods are common goods, and these crystals are prized chiefly because of their rarity. True sculpture he teaches to be the conquest of the plough-share and the chisel over clay; it is the victory of life; and the true sculptor "sees Pallas," that is, the spirit of life, and of wisdom in the choice of life to be honoured by art. This is another form of the lesson on "natural form." Life purifies design. Here is briefly the indication of the essential matter of these lectures:

True schools of sculpture are peculiar to nations in their youth and in their strong humanity. The Greeks found Phœnician and Etruscan art monstrous and made them human. The Florentines found Byzantine and Norman art monstrous and made them human—both the reforming schools being wholly sincere.

> "We, on the contrary, are now . . . absolutely without sincerity; absolutely, therefore, without imagination, and without virtue. Our hands are dexterous with the vile and deadly dexterity of machines;

our minds filled with incoherent fragments of faith, which we cling to in cowardice, without believing, and make pictures of, in vanity, without loving."

Then follows a sketch of the Thames Embankment; its gas jets coming out of fishes' tails borrowed from a refuse Neapolitan marble, and these ill-cast and lacquered to imitate bronze, adorned with a caduceus stolen from Mercury, a street-knocker from two or three million street doors, the initials of the casting firm, and a lion's head copied from the Greek; while the arch of Waterloo Bridge, under which this embankment passes, is but a "gloomy and hollow heap of wedged blocks of blind granite."

Sculpture touches life essentially, and is forbidden to recognise those accidental beauties, such as the growth of lichen on a tree, that a painter pauses on. Its drapery has caught the life of the body. The controversy between Florentine and Greek drapery—the Florentine having its own beauty rather than the body's beauty—is in truth the difference between painting and sculpture. In the study of the Greek Ruskin takes us through the nine centuries—three archaic, three central, and three decadent—whereof the fifth century B.C. is symmetrically the middle age and the greatest. He insists upon the naturalism of the Greeks, and plunges once more into that perpetual question—whether art can ever approach too near to nature, answering with that emphatic "No!" to which some of his pages hardly seem to assent literally. Once more he reproaches the artists called "ideal," whether sculptors or painters, for attempting to mend nature; and to this rebuke many and many an artist's heart must have replied that this is but a trap of words, for, at the worst, it is not nature the painter tries to mend, but his picture. In *Modern Painters* it had been written: "The picture which is taken as a substitute for nature had better be burned"; but are we forbidden to do honor to a "substitute" by the name, say, of emissary, ambassador, or representative?

"The true sign," says Ruskin, "of the greatest art is to part voluntarily with its greatness," by making the eyes of those who look upon it to desire the natural fact. And this the Greeks knew. Phalaris says of the bull of Perilaus: "It only wanted motion and bellowing to seem alive; and as soon as I saw it I cried out, It ought to be sent to the god"—to Apollo, that is, who would delight in a work worthy to deceive not the simple but the wise. The Greek "rules over the arts to this day, and will forever, because he sought not first for beauty, not first for passion or for invention, but for Rightness." With him was the origin not only of all broad, mighty, and calm conception, "but of all that is divided, delicate, and tremulous." To him is owing the gigantic pillar of Agrigentum and the "last fineness of the Pisan Chapel of the Thorn." The beginning of Christian chivalry was in his bridling of the white and the black horses—the spiritual and animal natures. "He became at last *Græculus esuriens*, little and hungry, and every man's errand boy," but this was in late ages, "by his iniquity, and his competition, and his love of talking."

Ruskin gives a Greek lesson on the modesty of art: —no block for building should be larger than a cart can carry, or a cross-beam and a couple of pulleys can lift; a lesson on the modesty of material in sculpture—clay, marble, metal having their limitations, which are also their particular powers; an exquisite lesson on the subtle laws of low relief; one on art handicraft and art for the multitude. As far as I know, the first—it is not quite the only—reference to Japanese art is in these lectures, which were illustrated by an admirably vital Japanese fish; but Oriental art was generally represented, in Ruskin's mind, by the Indian, which is obscure, dateless, and dead.

Two quotations follow, which need no explicit connection here with the rest:

> "Art is not possible to any sickly person, but involves the action and force of a strong man's arm from the shoulder."

And this from the lecture on Imagination:

> "Remember . . . that it is of the very highest importance that you should know what you *are*, and determined to be the best that you may be; but it is of no importance whatever, except as it may contribute to that end, to know what you have been. Whether your Creator shaped you with fingers, or tools, as a sculptor would a lump of clay, or gradually raised you to mankind through a series of inferior forms, is only of moment to you in this respect—that

in the one case you cannot expect your children to be nobler creatures than you are yourselves; in the other, every act and thought of your present life may be hastening the advent of a race which will look back to you, their fathers (and you ought at least to have attained the dignity of desiring that it may be so), with incredulous disdain."

The lectures close with a history of the decline of great art in the work of a great man—Michelangiolo—and a warning against the "sublimity" that has so taken captive the world. In choosing to admire his "Last Judgment" rather than Tintoretto's "Paradise," men have deliberately chosen, Ruskin tells us, God's curse instead of His blessing.

The *Spectator* accused Ruskin of attempting, by his teaching in this book, to make our rich nation poor, if only he could make it artistic. But I need not insist again on this—that he held the nation to be poor, intolerably poor in its millions, dangerously poor in its dependence on the bread of foreign fields.

Amongst the illustrations is that of the two profiles—the "Apollo of Syracuse" and the "Self-Made Man." The draughtsman of the latter most admirable head ("so vigorously drawn, and with so few touches, that Phidias or Turner himself could scarcely have done it better") is not named, but could have been no other than Keene.

CHAPTER XX

"THE EAGLE'S NEST" (1872)

THIS book was the one preferred by Carlyle. One must wonder whether the passage on the immorality of original or separate style in art seemed to him stuff o' the conscience, and whether he held an author, like a painter, to be bound not to produce "something different from the work of his neighbours"—in the English language, for example.

The Eagle's Nest (Slade Lectures) is an essay in search of that wisdom which is president over science, literature, and art—ultimately the divine sophia also called charity: "Art is wise only when unselfish in her labour; . . . Science wise only when unselfish in her statement." Art is the shadow or reflection of wise science; and both are peaceful, temperate, and content." The eagle and the mole have their natural places of knowledge and ignorance, but "man has the choice of stooping in science beneath himself and of rising above himself"; therefore he has to seek the sophia that is beyond, for his inspiration and restraint. He needs "imaginative knowledge," and especially "knowledge of the feelings of living creatures," knowledge of life.

> "Sophia is the faculty which recognises in all things their bearing upon life, in the entire sum of life that we know."

And sophia is offended by egoism :

> "In all base schools of art, the craftsman is dependent for his bread on originality ; that is to say, on finding in himself some fragment of isolated faculty, by which his work may be recognised as distinct from that of other men. We are ready enough to take delight in our little doings, without any such stimulus ; what must be the effect of the popular applause which continually suggests that the little thing we can separately do is as excellent as it is singular ! . . . In all great schools of art these conditions are exactly reversed. An artist is praised in these, not for what is different in him from others ; . . . but only for doing most strongly what all are endeavouring ; and for contributing . . . to some great achievement, to be completed by the unity of multitudes, and the sequence of ages."

Wisdom is outraged, not only in our art but in our science, which we have not used, for example, to prevent the famines in the East. Ruskin habitually accuses modern men of these failures as though they were immediate murders. The Middle Ages he loves were wont to put men, women and children to death by sword or privation or fire ; he multiplies the thousands that so died in an Italian town into the thousands that die by hunger in an Indian province, and with these numbers multiplies our guilt.

> "No people, understanding pain, ever inflicted so much ; no people, understanding facts, ever acted on them so little."

Mimetic art, says the third lecture, is in epitome in Shakespeare's sentence, placed in the mouth of

Theseus—"the hero," as it chances, "whose shadow, or semblance in marble, is admittedly the most ideal and heroic we possess of man"; and the sentence is: "The best in this kind are but shadows; and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them." And because the works of art are shadows, Ruskin would have us to love them and to use them only to enable us "to remember and love what they are cast by." To love art otherwise is to be the fool who wonders at his own shadow. Even Ruskin has spoken no sayings harder to bear than these. Wise art is in direct relation to wise science, we are told in the same lecture; they have the same subjects; and art helps science, and helps her more and more as the degrees of science rise; that is, art gives little help to the science of chemistry, little to the science of anatomy (it is Shakespeare that Ruskin has taken as the "subject," and he gauges what chemistry and anatomy have to tell us of Shakespeare); but it helps more the science of human sensibility, that science which has something to tell of Shakespeare's nerve-power and emotion; and it helps most of all the science of theology, which tells us of Shakespeare's relation to a Being greater than himself.

The lecture passes to the consideration of the sophia that stands above the several sciences; ornithology is the subject of the lecturer's present lesson, and nest-building gives him the opportunity for his loveliest work, wherein we are appropriately made to love the nest-building rather than the description. And the great artist, Ruskin says, works somewhat like the bird—"with the feeling we may attribute to a diligent bull-finch—that the thing, whether pretty or ugly, could not have been better done," and he is "thankful it is no worse." And though this is the feeling of the great, could not even ordinary men, asks Ruskin, be so simple in their measure that superior beings might be interested in their work, as men are in the birds'?

> "It cannot be imagined that either the back streets of our manufacturing towns, or the designs of our suburban villas, are things which the angels desire to look into; . . . but we should at least possess as much unconscious art as the lower brutes, and build nests which shall be, for ourselves, entirely convenient, and may perhaps in the eyes of superior beings appear more beautiful than to our own."

It would be easy to reply that the suburban villa with its bathrooms is—whatever else it may fail to be—more convenient and ingenious than a nest. And as for the noise of a town and the noise of birds, compared on a following page, Ruskin does not open any door on the crashing street he loathes, in order to listen to the Beethoven within the walls. Some sophia originally directed the prudence of the common builder; much sophia inspired the music. It is music again that gravely refuses assent to these lessons of humiliation, repeated in the fourth lecture.

Ruskin anticipates the murmurs of his hearers at hearing him rank sciences in degrees whereof chemistry holds the lowest and theology the highest; nevertheless he affirms that if theology be science at all, the highest is its place; and that it is a science other sciences vouch:

> "You will find it a practical fact that external temptation and inevitable trials of temper have power against you which your health and virtue depend on your resisting; that, if not resisted, the evil energy of them will pass into your own heart; . . . and that the ordinary and vulgarised phrase 'the Devil, or betraying spirit, is *in him*' is the most scientifically accurate which you can apply to any person so influenced."

All science, the lecture proceeds, must needs be modest, because although the field of fact is immeasurable, not so is the human power of research. Art is modest; Ruskin here commends humble landscape and discommends the Matterhorns and Monte Rosas; although elsewhere he laments that good painters are too easily content with the odds and ends of landscape, and leave noble scenery to the bad ones. Art, according to the present lesson, should be content. The promise that we shall know all things is a siren promise, as it was to Ulysses. Let us not abandon, for the sake of limited knowledge, "the charity that is for itself sufficing, and for others serviceable." And for the sake of contentment Ruskin allows us to be pleased in the little things we can do, "more than in the great things done by other people." He forbears here to intimidate us with that menacing question of the earlier page of these lectures—what will our selfishness grow to if we cherish our own achievement? For we are to confess the little we do to be little, and contributory. Art must be happy, and therefore content, even in its rudeness and ignorance:

> "Ignorance, which is contented and clumsy, will produce what is imperfect, but not offensive. But ignorance *dis*contented, and dexterous, learning what it cannot understand, and imitating what it cannot enjoy, produces the most loathsome forms of manufacture that can disgrace or mislead humanity."

The finest art of the world has been provincial, limited and strengthened by local difficulties, and this is another occasion for contentment.

The sixth lecture is on "The Relation to Art of the Science of Light." Ruskin studies the sense of sight as what it is—a spiritual phenomenon. The spirituality of the senses is manifest to him, as to every thinker. Science, at the time of the writing of this lecture, was beginning to adopt the view that "sight is purely material"; but the "view" was not a view—it was no more than a confusion of words. At the same date some rhetoric had been spent by a scientific writer on the sun: "He rears the whole vegetable world, . . . his fleetness is in the lion's foot, he springs in the panther, he slides in the snake," &c., which is also but a kind of circular work of words. Ruskin's retort is so exquisitely written that it must be extracted with little shortening:

> "As I was walking in the woods, and moving very quietly, I came suddenly on a small steel-grey serpent, lying in the middle of the path; and it was

> greatly surprised to see me. Serpents, however, always have complete command of their feelings, and it looked at me for a quarter of a minute without the slightest change of posture; then, with an almost imperceptible motion, it began to withdraw itself beneath a cluster of leaves. Without in the least hastening its action it gradually concealed the whole of its body. I was about to raise one of the leaves, when I saw what I thought was the glance of another serpent, in the thicket at the path side; but it was the same one, which, having once withdrawn itself from observation beneath the leaves, used its utmost agility to spring into the wood; and with so instantaneous a flash of motion that I never saw it leave the covert, and only caught the gleam of light as it glided away into the copse. . . . I am pleased to hear . . . how necessarily that motion proceeds from the sun. But where did its *device* come from?"

From the sun too; and the flight of the dove from the sun also; but the difference of those derivations, whence are they? "Animism" had hardly yet entered into the controversy in 1872. How much of a man does a serpent see? asks Ruskin:

> "Make me a picture of the appearance of a man, as far as you can judge it can take place on the snake's retina. . . . How say you of a tiger's eye, or a cat's? . . . I want to know what the appearance is to an eagle, two thousand feet up, of a sparrow in a hedge."

In the lecture on "The Sciences of Inorganic Form" we find chiefly the lesson on drapery which teaches finely that drapery "must become organic under the artist's hand by his invention"; and in that following, on "Organic Form," the teaching enforced—that art has nothing to do with structure, causes, or absolute facts, and that therefore "the study of anatomy generally, whether of plants, animals, or man, is an impediment to graphic art." Man has to think of all living creatures "with their skins on them and with their souls in them;" he is to know

> "How they are spotted, wrinkled, furred, and feathered; and what the look of them is, in their eyes; and what grasp, or cling, or trot, or pat, in their paws and claws."

Then follow some exquisite pages on the dogs of art, from Anacreon's in the Greek vase-painting, onwards. Sir Joshua, painting child and dog together in their "infinite differences and blessed harmonies," never, says Ruskin, thinks of their bones.

> "You might dissect all the dead dogs in the water supply of London without finding out what, as a painter, it is here your only business precisely to know—what sort of shininess there is at the end of a terrier's nose."

Yet the breath was hardly gone in which he had taught his hearers to study a little piece of broken stone for its veining, as, in another volume, we shall find him withering Millais for having painted a wild rose with a petal too few, and commending Holbein for having drawn a skeleton with a rib too many. The student should easily understand the difference. In the case of the rose the painter had committed a fault against the duty of ordinary and innocent sight—a painter's first duty, the duty of the daily vision; not so in the case of the skeleton. And almost, though not quite, the same difference may be found between geological reserves and anatomical secrets. Anatomy, says Ruskin, misleads the artist especially in the study of the eagle's head, with its projection of the brow, hooding the eye—its most eagle-like characteristic, which the bone does not suggest and which no dissector seems to have taken the trouble to notice. But the Greek artist, and the Pisan, knew of it. Furthermore, through anatomy in art the lower class of animals are represented well, and the higher, ill. As for the study of the nude, Ruskin holds it to be, at any rate, a bad thing for our care for beauty in dress and in the conditions of actual life; and he corrects the popular idea of Greek power: it was due little to admiration of bodily beauty, but much to those causes of bodily beauty—"discipline of the senses, romantic ideal of honour, respect for justice, and belief in God." The lecture ends with "a piece of theology . . .—a science much closer to your art than anatomy":

"'I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life.' Disbelieve that! and your own being is degraded into the state of dust driven by the wind. . . . All Nature, with one voice—with one glory,—is set to teach you reverence for the life communicated to you from the Father of Spirits: . . . and all the strength, and all the arts of men, are measured by, and founded upon, their reverence for the passion, and their guardianship of the purity, of Love. Gentlemen— . . . that epithet of 'gentle,' as you well know, indicates the intense respect for race and fatherhood—for family dignity and chastity—which was visibly the strength of Rome, as it had been, more disguisedly, the strength of Greece."

The following lecture—"The Story of the Halcyon"—deplores the popular idea of education that leaves an Englishman in such a state of heart that when he sees a rare bird he kills it; that is, he has never learnt to see it rightly—to see its life. Man should see a bird rightly, and a man rightly :

"Then the last part of education will be—whatever is meant by that beatitude of the pure in heart—seeing God rightly."

In his study of the bird Ruskin proposes the mystery of the limiting laws of structure :

"It is appointed that vertebrated animals shall have no more than four legs, and that, if they require to fly, the two legs in front must become wings, it being against law that they should have more than these four members in ramification from the spine. . . . What strongly planted three-legged animals there might have been! what symmetrically radiant five-legged ones! what volatile six-legged ones; what circumspect seven-headed ones! Had Darwinism been true, we should long ago have split our heads in two with foolish thinking, or thrust out, from above our covetous hearts, a hundred desirous arms and clutching hands. . . . But the law is around us, and within; unconquerable; granting, up to a certain limit, power over our bodies to circumstance and will : beyond that limit, inviolable, inscrutable, and, so far as we know, eternal."

His contempt for " Darwinism " Ruskin explains by the kind of Darwinian argument then presented to students. He himself had consulted Darwin's account of the construction of the peacock's feather. None of the existing laws of life regulating the local disposition of colour in plume-filaments seemed to be known :

> " I am informed only that peacocks have grown to be peacocks out of brown pheasants because the young feminine brown pheasants like fine feathers. Whereupon I say to myself, ' Then either there was a distinct species of brown pheasants originally born with a taste for fine feathers, and therefore with remarkable eyes in their heads,—which would be a much more wonderful distinction of species than being born with remarkable eyes in their tails,—or else all pheasants would have been peacocks by this time.' "

The reader will do well to read this twice ; it is an extraordinarily full piece of writing.

From the lovely fables of Alcyone and Ceyx Ruskin quotes—it is wonderfully to the purpose of this book —the word of Simonides in his description of the halcyon days : " In the wild winter months Zeus gives the wisdom of calm." But as for us,

> " To what sorrowful birds shall *we* be likened, who make the principal object of our lives dispeace and unrest, and turn our wives and daughters out of their

nests to work for themselves? Nay, strictly speaking, we have not even got so much as nests to turn them out of."

On the old subject of the ill building of human nests Ruskin has an excellent phrase for the Houses of Parliament:

> "A number of English gentlemen get together to talk; they have no delight whatever in any kind of beauty; but they have a vague notion that the appointed place for their conversation should be dignified and ornamental; and they build over their combined heads the absurdest and emptiest piece of filigree,—and as it were eternal foolscap in freestone,—which ever human beings disgraced their posterity by."

While bullfinches "peck a Gothic tracery out of dead clematis," the English yeoman thinks it much if he gets from his landlord "four dead walls and a drain-pipe." He is lodged as "a puppet is dropped into a deal box." But two centuries ago, "without steam, without electricity, almost without books, and altogether without help from *Cassell's Educator*," the Swiss shepherd "could build himself a châlet, daintily carved, and with flourished inscriptions." No man should be satisfied with less than a cottage and a garden in pure air, and the nests of men should be nests of peace. The word is left, very exquisitely, with the halcyons; for Ruskin adds that the making of peace must be in this life:

> "Not the taking of arms against, but the building of nests amidst, its 'sea of troubles.'"

CHAPTER XXI

"ARIADNE FLORENTINA" (1873)

THE six Slade Lectures on Wood and Metal Engraving contain some of the severest of all the author's critical work—severest not because it shows a fault of Dürer or declares a certain destructive influence of Michelangiolo, but severest in its intensity of thought and in the closeness of the hold this adventurous and resolute mind takes upon some discovered track of thought, however difficult, and compels the reader to attempt the path. Many have held Ruskin's method of thought to have been something less purely experimental than this; and let us grant that he does set out upon an untried quest with a "working hypothesis"; but without a working hypothesis experiment itself would lack impetus and direction, and would sometimes hesitate to move in the abyss. That detachment from his own working hypothesis which the student of science owes to the end of his journey shall we claim of the student of ethics also? Surely there is but one assumption in *Ariadne Florentina*—that wherewith nearly all thinkers (including Kant, but, I suppose, excluding Nietzche) have done their work—that is, the confession of the moral law: that there is a good, and that pure cruelty, mere hatred, and ingratitude, for example, are contrary thereto. This book, in which so many things are pursued so far with an infinite courage, enterprise, and good-will, takes no more than this for granted, but takes it to heart—takes it so that neither height nor depth nor any other creature can separate the author from his assumption.

Everything following that was to be proved seems to be proved and demonstrated. One exception there is perhaps, and one that must make a strange effect of bathos stated here, but

"Thou canst not pluck a flower
Without troubling of a star;"

And there is nothing touched in these lectures but to great issues: I mean the apparently arbitrary law tacitly established whereby Ruskin separates oil-painting from all the other arts, and makes it solitary, judging it by other theories and on other terms than theirs. The sculptor, the draughtsman, the engraver are instructed to decide "what are the essential points in the things they see." Such decision is declared to be "a habit entirely necessary to strong humanity," and "natural to all humanity." And yet painting—oil-painting—is placed in the very next sentence under the disability (Ruskin here, for the purpose of his argument at the moment, confesses the disability) of a difference from all the arts in this respect: "Painting, when it is complete, leaves it much to your own judgment what to look at; and, if you are a fool, you look at the wrong thing: but in a fine woodcut the master says, 'You shall look at this or nothing.'"

When an artist to-day insists upon calling his work a " pattern " he does no more than Ruskin whom he thinks to oppose and refute, but who has said, for all to hear:

> " You know I told you a sculptor's business is first to cover a surface with pleasant *bosses*, whether they mean anything or not; so an engraver's is to cover it with pleasant *lines*, whether they mean anything or not. That they should mean something is indeed desirable afterwards; but first we must be ornamental."

But with colour this whole theory is tyrannously (or a modern reader will hold it to be tyrannously) altered. It is this insistence upon a certain kind of " completeness " in painting only and solely that has set the enmity (seeming to strike deep but not striking deep) between this the greatest of all teachers of art and some of the greatest of designers and composers who were also painters; and it is his insistence in this book upon local colour as the chief thing wherewith oil-painting is concerned that is the cause of his distrust, his disapproval, at best his half-praise, of some of the greatest painters of illumination and darkness, those who painted colour effaced, half-effaced, just recognised by flashes, fully confessed in turn by the over-ruling light.

Let me hazard the suggestion that Ruskin seems resolved, in treating the Gothic or colour schools, to set his painter with his back to the sun, so that he shall see all things, illuminated indeed but strong in their own colour; and forbids him to face the sun and to see all the world as it looks in that great confrontation—lustrous and illuminated indeed, but made up of infinite and innumerable shadow. But why should not the colourist look with the sun to-day and towards the sun to-morrow, and belong to both the two great schools by that simple power of taking both stations? A man and the sun may surely be allowed a complex and various relation with one another. True, Ruskin's theory of local colour was learnt in front of the works of the Tuscans, and above all in the Library of Siena, but is nothing to be added to Tuscany, by Holland, by Norwich, by France? His own Turner faced the sun, and he himself faces the sun in half his writings.

Ruskin—to me, I have to confess hardly intelligibly—joins the positive definite sight (the sight, let me call it, that you get, looking with the sun) to the high powers of imagination. He avers that the Italian master requires you to imagine a St. Elizabeth, and to see her with all completeness; but that the Dutch painter "only wishes you to imagine an effect of sunlight on cow-skin, which is a far lower strain of the imaginative faculty." Moreover, he calls the feeling for colour modified by sun a mere sensation—the device of men, who, "not being able to get any pleasure out of their thoughts, try to get it out of their sensations." This may have been accidentally the act of some chiaroscuro painters; but is it essentially the act of all? And is this clear seeing of St. Elizabeth in her red and blue essentially the work of the imagination and not of the mere fancy?

Surely there is no other occasion of controversy in this masterly book, wrought out of the very life of the intellect. We find this important word spoken to the student of engraving, at the outset: "Your own character will form your style, . . . but my business is to prevent, as far as I can, your having *any* particular style." This goes to the root, for all the arts. The technical lessons follow:

> "Engraving means, primarily, making a permanent cut or furrow. . . . The central syllable of the word has become a sorrowful one, meaning the most permanent of furrows. . . . Stone engraving is the art of countries possessing marble and gems; wood engraving, of countries overgrown with forest; metal engraving, of countries possessing treasures of silver and gold. And the style of a stone engraver is found on pillars and pyramids; the style of a wood engraver under the eaves of larch cottages; the style of a metal engraver in the treasuries of kings. Do you suppose I could rightly explain to you the value of a single touch on brass by Finiguerra, or on box by Bewick, unless I had grasp of the great laws of climate and country; and could trace the inherited sirocco or tramontana of thought to which the souls and bodies of the men owed their existence?"

He has that "grasp"; and explains principally the inheritance of the Florentine and that of the German —Sandro Botticelli and Holbein. "Holbein is a civilised boor; Botticelli a re-animate Greek." And this is his admirable judgment of the relation of these two to the recovered ancient learning and to the classic spirit: that learning was probably cumbrous to Holbein:

> "But Botticelli receives it as a child in later years recovers the forgotten dearness of a nursery tale; and is more himself, and again and again himself, as he breathes the air of Greece, and hears, in his own Italy, the lost voice of the Sibyl murmur again by the Avernus Lake. . . . It destroys Raphael; but it graces him, and is a part of him. It all but destroys Mantegna; but it graces him. And it does not hurt Holbein, just because it does *not* grace him—never for an instant is part of him."

Was ever judgment more exquisite? And this, on Florence herself:

> "The second Greeks—these Florentine Greeks re-animate—are human more strongly, more deeply, leaping from the Byzantine death at the call of Christ, 'Loose him and let him go!'"

Take also this great passage. Ruskin himself avers that it contains the most audacious, and the most valuable, statement he had made, on practical art, in these lectures. He had seen that the study of anatomy brought with it a certain injury, but he had sought the ruin of the Masters—Tintoretto for example—elsewhere:

> "And then at last I got hold of the true clue: 'Il disegno di Michelangiolo.' And the moment I had dared to accuse that, it explained everything; and I saw that the betraying demons of Italian art, led on by Michael Angelo, had been, not pleasure, but knowledge; not indolence, but ambition; and not love, but horror."

From the study of Botticelli's Sibyls, full of divine perceptions, I take this little passage; it adorns the description of the Libyan Sibyl, "loveliest of the Southern Pythonesses":

> "A less deep thinker than Botticelli would have made her parched with thirst, and burnt with heat. But the voice of God, through nature, to the Arab or the Moor, is not in the thirst, but in the fountain, not in the desert, but in the grass of it. And this Libyan Sibyl is the spirit of wild grass and flowers, springing in desolate places."

In treating of Holbein, with a triumph for Holbein's simplicity over even Dürer's gifts, Ruskin makes use of some theology. He ought not to have permitted himself to use other men's habits of phrase by speaking of an "Indulgence" as a "permission to sin." The knowledge that, according to the definition of those who hold the doctrine, an Indulgence (or remission of canonical penance) cannot be gained at all without a resolution never to commit any sin of any kind whatever, is knowledge easily accessible. Here, finally, is the magnificent page, on one of the plates of the "Dance of Death":

> "The labourer's country cottage—the rain coming through its roof, the clay crumbling from its partitions, the fire lighted with a few chips and sticks on a raised piece of the mud floor. . . . But the mother can warm the child's supper of bread and milk so—holding the pan by the long handle; and on mud floor though it be, they are happy—she and her child, and its brother—if only they could be left so. They

shall not be left so: the young thing must leave them —will never need milk to be warmed for it any more. It would fain stay—sees no angels—feels only an icy grip on its hand, and that it cannot stay. Those who love it shriek and tear their hair in vain, amazed in grief. 'Oh, little one, thou must lie out in the fields then, not even under this poor torn roof of thy mother's to-night!'"

CHAPTER XXII

"VAL D'ARNO" (1874)

THESE ten Slade Lectures are historical studies of Tuscan art during that great act of the war of Guelph and Ghibelline which had its centre in the middle of the thirteenth century in the city of Florence. The reader may hesitate at the outset to undertake *Val d' Arno* if he fears politics so transfigured as in the third paragraph, in which the mountains rehearse the solid and rational authority of the State; and the clouds "the more or less spectral, hooded, imaginative, and nubiform authority of the Pope, and Church." Furthermore, Ruskin uses the names of the Montagus or Montacutes, and the Capulets or Cappelletti—"the hatted, scarlet-hatted, or hooded"—as but lurking names for Ghibelline and Guelph; and in the tower and the dome he sees figures of the same two powers dividing the great Middle Ages, and contending in arms upon the Lombard plains and in the valley of that Tuscan river which carried the whispers of Florence to the walled banks of the seaward city. These allegories in act are somewhat excessive in their ingenuity; but the history that follows shows Ruskin's severe hold of facts, the facts upon which the historian waits as a surgeon upon the pulse of a man he cannot help. Ruskin has to tell vital history, and therefore spiritual history; and he looks so closely for spiritual human meaning into the ambiguous faces of Charles of Anjou and Manfred, Frederick II. and Innocent IV. (very much in the manner of Carlyle, whom he called his master), that it is well he should have the resolution to withdraw, in turn, to the distance that commands the origins and issues of human history, and that from a high place he should see also these similitudes of clouds and armies, mountains and dynasties, and men as trees walking.

Ruskin is punctual in his science of historical judgment, and will not allow a passage of five years in that great mid-century, the thirteenth, to leave so much as one equivocal record. And as the momentous work done by Nicola Pisano yields all its significance to this scrutiny, so does that antique work which prompted him. So like each other as a pod and a bud may seem in the eyes of those who do not well know the plant, so may the decadence and the promise of that various Greek work which we call Byzantine. As to some passage of sculpture we may ask, is this the impotence of decline—or rather of the time after decline, or is it the difficulty of youth? Somewhat there is, hampered or folded—in the right sense implicit. From *Val d'Arno* we learn that both the withered and the vital existed in contemporary Greek work—twelfth-century Byzantine; some of this art was in the husk and some in the sheath, if one may use again the figure of the plant. Vasari did not distinguish the one from the other: and some that is of the husk is held in honour at the Lateran, and some that is of the sheath at Pisa.

From the Sarcophagus with Meleager's hunt on it Nicola Pisano learnt that which was the beginning of Modern Art. This derivation of life, which to the less accurate eye seemed to be going forward in a general and broadcast revival, Ruskin traces through this one strait way, through this one Greek sculpture and this one Tuscan sculptor, showing it to be here, and here only, a derivation of veritable life: one genealogy, the counsels of one mind, one genius, one little ten years' work—how narrow is the pass, how slight the thread, how single the issue! The authentic art, how local, and how brief! In the pulpit of Nicola at Pisa (the student may study the model at South Kensington) and especially in its five cusped arches—trefoils —Ruskin, as single in the recognition as the Pisan in the design, recognised the first architecture of Gothic Christianity, and discovered its point of junction with the art of Greece. He defends and holds this pass of authenticity, this patent, despite some adverse guides who seem to have pushed their way by other outlets; but let it be borne in mind that what Ruskin has traced of the delicate differences in the history of art he has gauged not by the eye only, but also by the finger. He has followed the sculptor by drawing; has felt sensibly and directly the direction of the bygone human hand; has "remembered in tranquillity the emotion" of another; and has traced the working of hour by hour that was charged with all the fortunes of the Second Civilisation. A pulpit was this significant piece of art, not an altar, nor a tomb; and the Greek sculpture that inspired it was on a sarcophagus; facts that somewhat (though rather by chance) jar with Ruskin's conclusion to this same chapter: "Christian architecture . . . is for the glory of death, . . . and is to the end definable as architecture of the tomb." Upon this follows a fine passage upon tombs and their treasure, with the incidental addition:

> "It has been thought, gentlemen, that there is a fine Gothic revival in your streets of Oxford, because you have a Gothic door to your County Bank. Remember, at all events, it was other kind of buried treasure, and bearing other interest, which Nicola Pisano's Gothic was set to guard."

At Perugia arose the marble sculptured fountain of Giovanni Pisano, at Siena that of Jacopo della Quercia. Ruskin felt bitter regret that he had not seen the Sienese fountain, before it had been torn to pieces and restored, except with heedless eyes when he had been a boy.

> "I observe that Charles Dickens had the fortune denied to me. 'The market-place, or great Piazza, is a large square, with a great broken-nosed fountain in it.' (*Pictures from Italy*.)"

The historical essay contained in these lectures begins with a passage that opens a door from on high upon a historic country. As the generalising historian of our first lessons was wont to talk of watersheds and watering rivers, dull as a map, Ruskin, using an equally large gesture, shows a landscape-nation: the valleys of Lombardy, of Etruria, and of Rome—of the

Po, the Arno, and the Tiber—fertile with the various vitality of Italy ; the chivalry of Germany, of France, and of the Saracen riding those fields in war. Against some brief historic judgments in his own wilful manner—sudden judgments making, strangely enough, a hasty end of prolonged and difficult thought—the reader revolts. Here is one : " Before the twelfth century the nations were too savage to be Christian, and after the fifteenth too carnal." To the glory of these four hundred years, then, he sacrifices at a blow the Thebaid, Chrysostom and Nazianzen, Augustine and Gregory, and the multitude of Bishoprics of North Africa, and the great Christian peasant populations of the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, who have laboured in patience upon Breton, Provençal, Lombard, Tuscan, Irish earth. It is of nations, not of States, that Ruskin speaks ; otherwise, we should have granted him that States have not been Christian ; the historian can hardly venture to claim that name for the German Empire or the French Monarchy, or the temporal power of the Papacy. Ruskin further explains his four hundred years :

> " The delicacy of sensation and refinements of imagination necessary to understand Christianity belong to the mid period when men, risen from a life of brutal hardship, are not yet fallen to one of brutal luxury."

Whether brutal luxury is a name fit for the softer arts of life—to use the usual word, the " comforts "—learnt by mankind since the fifteenth century, I know not; it is at any rate a tenable opinion that the most brutal thing about them is that they belong to a minority. But granting this, there are yet perpetual generations of men living in precisely this condition,—" risen from a life of brutal hardship and not yet fallen to one of brutal luxury." Assuredly that condition was not confined to a few violent and unhappy centuries, centuries when for a superstition little children were dashed against the stones of their poor villages, Imperial or Papal; when, for a calumny, the young devout Templars, flowers of masculine innocence, self-sacrifice, and good faith, were burnt alive, a score at one time; when, for a jealousy of trade, one furious city lay in wait for the destruction of another; when the revenge upon a political enemy was to hew his son's head off before his eyes, so as to make a last spectacle for those eyes before they were put out, and ten years in a dungeon without a page to read or a tree to look at was a common prelude to penal death. Not then only did a people obscure, unnamed, innumerable, live somewhere between savagery and luxury, but century by century ever since then. All the centuries have brought this life to pass, and the race has followed this narrow way by a multitude that no man can number. Moreover, is that passage, between crude conditions and effete, trodden only by a people corporately? A man lately freed from the main force that compelled his childhood, and generously simple in that freedom, not yet slothful or fond of money, is somewhat in the condition of Ruskin's nations, released from savagery and not corrupt.

From that more direct teaching of art, for which the student will consult *Val d'Arno*, may be cited a subtle refutation, or rather correction, of the modern principle as to "decorating construction." A brief study of the decoration of the porch of the Baptistery at Pisa shows us how arbitrary is all great decoration. Construction is followed indeed, but with happy choice, decision, and difference, whereby one member is richly and intently adorned, and another left blank—the construction giving no suggestion of such caprice. To decorate your construction, we learn, is a good rule for one who should be barely conscious of it; but for a sculptor without the good fortune of genius it is at once too much and too little—it shows the way but does not teach the walk; and he who thinks he has but to follow the road would have a languid movement. So, too, would the rhymer who wrote iambics without inspiration in the transposition of accents and of quantities. As, in *The Seven Lamps*, Ruskin showed how the outer colouring of buildings had all its vitality in its own arbitrary design, so he shows the sculptural decoration to have also, though less independently, a life of its own. The life of the material, too, he touches in the chapters on "Marble Couchant" and "Marble Rampant," and the nature, the place, and the history of the stone, respected by the ancient builders, who laid it as it had lain in the quarry. And here, by the way, is another of those sayings that should long ago have corrected the usual misunderstanding of Ruskin's doctrine: "You are . . . an artist by animating your copy of nature into vital variation." Ruskin goes on to tell that the "reserved variation" of the Greeks had for a time escaped him, but that he had at last found them to be as various as the Goths; and that the Greek sea or river whirl-pool, varied infinitely, was the main source of the spiral or rampant decoration of Gothic, and of the luxuriant design of the early Pisans. Of Giovanni Pisano Ruskin has written: "To him you owe . . . the grace of Ghiberti, the tenderness of Raphael, the awe of Michael Angelo. Second-rate qualities in all three, but precious in their kind." Great is this mind that recognises the "awe" of Buonarroti as the second-rate quality of a great man. Ruskin's mind was in fact immortally antique, and in possession of inseparable Greek antecedents, whatever it found to do in the altering world. The ethical sermon of *Val d'Arno* is chiefly on that text of Carlyle's whereof the warning has been in vain:

> "This idle habit of accounting for the 'moral sense'—the moral sense, thank God, is a thing you never will 'account for.' . . . By no greatest happiness principle, greatest nobleness principle, or any principle whatever, will you make that in the least clearer. . . . Visible infinites: . . . say nothing of them . . . for you can say nothing wise."

CHAPTER XXIII

"DEUCALION" (1875–1883)

In 1875 Ruskin prefaced *Deucalion* with an ironic sketch of the unachieved work for which he had until then collected material: an analysis of the Attic art of the fifth century B.C.; an exhaustive history of northern thirteenth-century art; a history of Florentine fifteenth-century art; a life of Turner, with analysis of modern landscape art; a life of Walter Scott; a life of Xenophon, with analysis of the general principles of education; a commentary on Hesiod; and a general description of the geology and botany of the Alps. Meanwhile, at the outset of this little work, chiefly on geology, he finds place for a brilliant essay on heraldic colours, fairly proves "gules" to be derived from the Zoroastrian word for rose, and not from the Latin and Romance words for a red throat of prey; quotes St. Bernard on this accidental subject, and corrects the "badgers' skins" that were hung with rams' skins upon the Tabernacle of Israel, to seals'—from the sea-flocks that then swam the Mediterranean by the city of Phocœa, and were assigned to Proteus in the Odyssey. *Deucalion*, *Proserpina*, and an essay on birds—*Love's Meinie*—are the nearest approach that other labours allowed to the works on natural history threatened, with a smile—the geology and botany were to be "in twenty-four volumes"—and they are strangely complete, full of that natural fact which Ruskin has acknowledged as at once the justification and the judge of art, the beginning and the never-attainable end. It is perhaps with a contemptuous consent to be, by some, misread, that in his contention on glaciers with Professor Tyndall he often slights the name of "science" and "man of science"; whereas obviously it was on the point of science that issue was joined, and if he did not reproach his adversary in that this adversary was too little and not too much a man of science, he reproached him to no purpose. Ruskin, intending to teach the form of mountains as they have stood since man was man, and as they have suffered the daily strokes of rains or have carried the varying burden of snow, makes very sure of the little he has to tell of the anatomy of those clothed figures. The upheaving forces of the first remote period and the sculptural forces of the second are treated with the brevity that befits their unknown ages and immeasurable action; but to the disintegrating and diffusing forces of the earth as the eyes of·man have known it, Ruskin gives the study of many a year. The human race has had many and many centuries in which to watch the Alps—and has made small use thereof; but out of those ages of ages a little half-century has been saved—the years of this one man's studies; and all that fifty years can tell, in pledge of the rest unobserved and unrecorded, was read by him with his own eyes directly, immediately, without feigning, without use of the reading of others, with experiment and verification—experiment on the spot, and experiment depending upon time. All that fifty years could tell to this watchful intellect, from first to last, is told for ever, with so much of retrospect and prophecy as a slow half-century of the life of rocks affords. Ruskin has been for this space of time the contemporary of the Alps and of the Alpine rivers, an effectual contemporary who measured the patience of his years with the long labours of weather and of gravitation in the heights and valleys. Of the years of the Alps it may be said that fifty were also his. This specimen of mountain existence—this great *échantillon* and sample of many thousand ages, is, as it were, saved and put upon human record. It is saved by one man's watch well kept, as, in another region of experience, a specimen of passionate emotion, difficult because of its brevity, as the movement of mountains is difficult because of its length, is saved by the instant watch of a poet well kept, and put upon human record.

Assuredly it is not too much to claim for Ruskin's work on the Alps and the Jura that it was, conspicuously, and unlike that of other glacialists, all observation and all experiment; there were, in its course, no guesses. Therefore he corrected some inferences of his fellow-workers', and in particular ratified with a great addition James Forbes's discovery of the general internal thaw of Alpine snows; Ruskin it is who finds an argument in the " subsiding languor " of the flowing glacier. His work of observation is necessarily accompanied by theory and by calculation. On all these grounds he contends with Professor Tyndall, and the contention, to be properly understood, needs much more than the mere reading of the lecture, even with the help of the diagrams. For the voice must have expressed ironies that the print does but point with a note of admiration; moreover, the hearers had Mr. Tyndall's assertions that ice could not stretch fresh in their memories, and were ready to be surprised by Ruskin's proof that ice, in fact, could stretch. Not that all was irony; there was some hard hitting:

> "His incapacity of drawing, and ignorance of perspective, prevented him from constructing his diagrams either clearly enough to show him his own mistakes, or prettily enough to direct the attention of his friends to them: and they luckily remain to us, in their absurd immortality."

In regard to the other subject specially under examination—the action of mountain rivers—Ruskin has concluded that the cutting or deepening work of these waters was done under conditions unknown to the present race of man, and that there has been no action except that of the lifting of river-beds and the encumbering of water-courses, since the earth has been man's world. But this judgment upon the facts of the past—whether measurably or immeasurably far—serves in Ruskin's studies entirely to inform the eyes of those who are to look upon the aspect of the present, and who need that their simplicity in understanding and their vigilance in seeing should be strengthened by knowledge. It is the present in the act of passage that the eyes are to be made ready to perceive, and the lesson is one for painters—indeed for impressionists: the mountain, the cleft, the water-courses with their past so sealed, and their present so slowly to be known, are landscape facing the simple eyes of a painter. At the close of his subtle and exact—essentially most logical—reasoning on geology the author of *Deucalion* refuses the name of philosopher, and avers that his teaching is that of the village showman's " Look, and you shall see." But the fact that he himself has laboured so explicitly over two but partially visible things—geology and the past—proves how much he himself had to owe to the promptings and the checkings whereby knowledge guards simplicity, and how little he would trust any student but a genius to the guidance of the first simplicity. It is surely for the second simplicity that he so profoundly prepares.

It must not, however, be forgotten that although Ruskin worked for art with the single and present intention of giving authority to the plain observer, he had long studied the Alpine country, as he tells us, " with the practical hope of arousing the attention of the Swiss and Italian peasantry to an intelligent administration of the natural treasures of their woods and streams." And as he would have done something to arrest the distress and disease of the peasantry of the Valais—people who hereditary and natural adversity had forced to grief but never to despair, so he had offered suggestions for the protection of Verona from the turbulent Adige above the city, and for the succour of the Romans from inundation. The Italian Government spent the taxes of agriculture, however, not on the defences of river cities threatened by mountain streams, but in the decking of Tuscan cities with Parisian boulevards.

At the risk of dwelling too much upon the mere controversy of *Deucalion*, I must extract the brilliant phrase of rebuke:

> "The delicate experiments by the conduct of which Professor Tyndall brought his audiences into what he is pleased to call 'contact with facts' (in olden times we used to say 'grasp of facts': modern science, for its own part, prefers, not unreasonably, the term 'contact,' expressive merely of occasional collision with them) must remain inconclusive."

Remember always that "modern science" is reproved, throughout, for defect of science; the phrase "occasional collision with facts," in derision of the Professor's "contact," is exquisitely and characteristically witty. In truth, whatever may be the chances of war as to the case in controversy, ill befalls Ruskin's antagonist in words: he has the scholarship, the invention, the spirit, the delicacy, and the luck of language. Take another reproof—that which he administered to the "scientific people" who had taken the name of *anguis*, the strangling thing—a name that was used in Latin for the more terrible forms of snake—to give it "to those which can't strangle anything. The *anguis fragilis* breaks like a tobacco-pipe; but imagine how disconcerting such an accident would be to a constrictor!" This occurs in the fragmentary chapter on "Living Waves," making one volume with *Deucalion*, in which Ruskin accompanies (but without contention, in this case, and with none but harmonious banter) a lecture of Professor Huxley's. The chapter is a kind of spiritual version of the development of species, and a study in hereditary imagination.

CHAPTER XXIV

"PROSERPINA" (1875–1886)

THIS gentle, ardent, and boyish boy must have breathed hard and close over his collections of minerals and plants. He was unsatisfied with knowledge, and the books, few and arid, in which he looked for figures and definitions, although good in the main and sure of his respect, failed him as the "modern science" of later times was to fail him; he charged them with futile words and with the blanks, instead of answers, that met some of his pertinent questions. What he began over a boy's cabinet and herbarium he never afterwards forsook. He was a reader—and an untiring one—only in the second place; he studied crystallisation and plants, as he studied the spiritual nature of man, at first hand. *Proserpina*, a book of botany made lovely, was written "to put, if it might be, some elements of the science . . . into a form more tenable by ordinary human and childish faculties" than had been the form wherewith the faculties, human and childish in the highest sense, of his own elect boyhood had wrought as they could, docile and zealous, and ill-supplied, making much of little, but yet often disappointed. *Proserpina* had for its accessory title, "Studies of Wayside Flowers while the Air was yet pure among the Alps and in the Scotland and England which my Father knew." It is illustrated by the writer's noble drawings. The particular charm of the book is that it is a real meditation upon the theme, the work of one who lets the reader see process and progress. And the value is in this—that the questions it considers are problems of the flowers, which the botany book left him, as a boy and afterwards, to read in their aspect and to answer if he could. The first chapter is full of questions, some answered, some unanswered, on Moss—the gold and green and " the black, which gives the precious Velasquez touches "; and what the eye, slightly helped by a magnifying glass, sees of the tiny structure of the moss of walls and woods is described with infinite grace. The chapter on the Leaf is memorable for a paragraph in which Ruskin relates his misadventures amongst the authorities on botany in his search of instruction as to the nature of sap. Sap was not in the index of Dresser, nor *sêve* in that of Figuier. Lindley told him of " the course taken by the sap after entering a plant." " My dear doctor, . . . you know, far better than I, that sap never does enter a plant at all; but only salt, or earth and water, and that the roots alone could not make it." Memorable is also this from the same chapter—" that vital power, which scientific people are usually as afraid of naming as common people are of naming Death." Ruskin proposes, as he goes, a new nomenclature, more scholarly and more strict—pure Latin, pure Greek when a distinction is needed, pure English concurrently. Nor will he have nursery literature to go wild with a semblance of precision, uncorrected. This he rebukes with a sweetness that the professors do not get from him; but when a lady, writing pretty lessons for children, makes an easy show of defining a weed as a plant that has got into the wrong place, Ruskin retorts, "Some plants never do. Who ever saw a wood anemone or a heath blossom in the wrong place? Who ever saw a nettle . . . in the right one?" He cannot know much, by the way, of Swiss country households in spring who has not seen the good woman cutting young nettles into her apron, for the soup; good for the blood, and an excellent vegetable after the salt food of a mountain winter, is this. But has Ruskin or any one failed to welcome that early little tender nettle when the March earth is dark brown under the cloudy skies, and full of life, and along the foot of the hedgerows the sod scarce heaves for the delicate nettle and a celandine or two? Anon, *Proserpina* has the "scentless daisy," making much of the humility of that flower of light. It is true that many grown-up people never smell a daisy, which has a small fragrance close to itself; but had Ruskin for once forgotten his early childhood? These are but accidents, and they merely serve to make somewhat tedious the perpetual moral lessons: for an example or a warning to go with every flower is endurable only when all the facts are beyond question. What is important and characteristic is the original and final resolve of this mind to confess and maintain the properties that men call noble, beautiful, evil, noisome, ignoble, to be so veritably, in the sense known to them and to their fathers, absolutely—the perception of such qualities being not only a fact to be reckoned with, at least as gravely as other facts are reckoned with, but a divine power of the human spirit, its judgment of the world. It is perhaps an unanswerable question whether, keeping this fast hold upon the idea of an essential good, Ruskin has not followed it into arbitrary ways, attributing to things a good and an evil that are in truth nothing but the tradition of men beset by the collective memory of their primitive dangers and necessities, and by the individual memory of their own race-dreams in childhood. With the moral lesson of *Proserpina*, only once or twice importunate, and always noble, severe, and benign, are mingled such feats of illustration, allusion, and intricate history as those of the chapter on the Poppy. Ruskin's persevering eye saw the poppy confused with the grape by the Byzantine Greeks, and the poppy and the grape with palm fruit; saw the palm, in the stenography of design, pass into a nameless symmetrical ornament and thence into the Greek iris (Homer's blue iris, and Pindar's water-flag); saw it read by the Florentines, when they made Byzantine art their own, into their fleur-de-lys, with two poppy-heads on each side of the entire foil in their finest heraldry; saw, on the other hand, the poppy altering the acanthus-leaf under the chisel of the Greek, until the northern worker of the twelfth century took the thistle-head for the poppy, and the thistle-leaf for the acanthus, the true poppy-head remaining in the south, but more and more confused with grapes, until the

Renaissance sculptors are content with any boss full of seed, but insist always upon some such pod as an important part of their ornament—the bean-pods of Brunelleschi's lantern at Florence, for example.

> "Through this vast range of art note this singular fact, that the wheat-ear, the vine, the fleur-de-lys, the poppy, and the jagged leaf of the acanthus-weed, or thistle, occupy the entire thoughts of the decorative workmen trained in classic schools, to the exclusion of the rose, the true lily, and other flowers of luxury."

A mingling of subtle history with morals gives us an admirable page on noble Scottish character in the chapter on the Thistle. In that on the Stem we have a vigorous instruction upon that spiral growing which expresses a flame of life, as in the trunks of great chestnut-trees; of that subtle action Ruskin has drawn an example in a waste-thistle. We have also a lesson upon the structural change of direction that always takes place at the point where branches begin to assert themselves. Who else has caused us so to feel the wood, its direction, its law, its liberty, its seasons, and the years of its life? I, as one of so many whose parents read *Modern Painters* in their own youth, remember my father's pointing to a tree and telling me that whereas the Old Masters were apt to draw the stem of a diminishing or tapering form, Ruskin had made us all to see that no stem ever grows less until it puts forth a branch, and no branch until it puts forth a twig. And ever after I have felt the stem live, as I could never have felt it had I continued to think it a thing so paltry that it could diminish as it grew. Who but Ruskin, moreover, has had this sense of the mathematics of tender things ?—" I never saw such a lovely perspective line as the pure front leaf profile," he says of some violet.

One of the principal intentions in the writing of *Proserpina* was the planning—with a boy's pleasure added to a scholar's—of the new terminology that was to be acceptable to students in the five languages—Greek, Latin, French, Italian, and English —

> " I shall not be satisfied unless I can feel that the little maids who gather their first violets under the Acropolis rock may receive for them Æschylean words again with joy. I shall not be content, unless the mothers watching their children at play, in the Ceramicus of Paris, . . . may yet teach them there to know the flowers which the Maid of Orleans gathered at Domremy. I shall not be satisfied unless every word I ask from the lips of the children of Florence and Rome may enable them better to praise the flowers that are chosen by the hand of Matilda and bloom around the tomb of Virgil."

Incidentally we have a brief passage of autobiography telling how Ruskin travelled when he was young, in a little carriage of his own, full of pockets; and an inn is mentioned as having been described by Dickens " in his wholly matchless manner." Wholly matchless; and it is this great describer who says so. Now and then there is a slight shock of encounter between them. At Boulogne Dickens thanked Heaven that no Englishman had been up the tower in the high walled town, to measure it; at that time Ruskin was, in fact, measuring towers. Finally, from this little book on Botany, written with great simplicity, may be taken a description by Ruskin of his own language: "Honest English, of good Johnsonian lineage, touched here and there with colour of a little finer of Elizabethan quality."

CHAPTER XXV

GUIDE BOOKS

"MORNINGS IN FLORENCE" (1875-1877)

"ST. MARK'S REST" (1877-1884)

"THE BIBLE OF AMIENS" (1880-1885)

Mornings in Florence was written definitely as a guide-book—for six mornings with six lessons to be learnt in them. The chapters on Giotto are of the first importance; the reader cannot in this volume be taken, even briefly, through *Giotto at Padua* (1853-1860), or the abundant studies of Giotto's works at Assisi, widely scattered through Ruskin's writings; but he must understand Giotto to be Ruskin's original master in mediæval lineal art, as Nicola Pisano in mediæval sculpture; and Florence is Giotto's own city, containing his work done at all dates between his twelfth year and his sixtieth. Ruskin teaches us how to connect the work of his best time with his work in architecture, and with the Franciscan Order. To Giotto's fresco at Santa Maria Novella we are led through "a rich overture, . . . and here is a tune of four notes, on a shepherd's pipe." The theme is the meeting of St. Joachim and St. Anne, as it would be "according to Shakespeare or Giotto." There, too, is his "Presentation of the Virgin":

> "The boy who tried so hard to draw those steps in perspective had been carried down others, to his grave, two hundred years before Titian ran alone at Cadore. But, as surely as Venice looks on the sea, Titian looked on this, and caught the reflected light of it for ever."

Colour, too, Giotto founded. But all he began of Mediæval art was the continuation of Antiquity. His painting of a Gothic chapel Ruskin affirms to be but the painting of a Greek vase inverted, with the figures on the concave, as those on the convex, surface, bent in and out, possibly and impossibly, but always "living and full of grace":

> "Every line of the Florentine chisel in the fifteenth century is based on national principles of art which existed in the seventh century before Christ."

The chapter called "The Shepherd's Tower" is also, of course, on Giotto; and the tower was written of divinely in *The Seven Lamps*. Here we have a close reading of the sculptures of the *campanile*, whether Giotto's own or Andrea Pisano's—and Ruskin has worked delicately in distinguishing the two. Delicate also are the suggestions of the science of proportion in the chapter called "The Vaulted Book":

> "Beauty is given by the relation of parts—size by their comparison. The first secret in getting the impression of size in this chapel [the Spanish chapel, Santa Maria Novella] is the *dis*proportion between pillar and arch. . . . Another great, but more

subtle secret is in the *in*equality and immeasurability of the curved lines; and the hiding of the form by the colour."

St. Mark's Rest has in part the character of a recantation. As the *Stones of Venice* praised Titian, Tintoretto, and Giorgione, so *St. Mark's Rest* turns with an impulse of recognition, of regret for time lost, and of ardent reparation and tenderness, to the work of Carpaccio. If it were not nearly a cruel irreverence to say so, it might be said that John Ruskin too, as well as Europe, had had his Renaissance—although his Renaissance was controlled, justified, and maintained in the dignity of incorruption, unlike the world's. This abundant Paradise of Tintoretto, these doges, this glory, what was it else, even though its warmth kept it clean as living creatures are clean? Warm in the colour of Titian, this Renaissance was warmer still in the heart of Ruskin, but Renaissance it was, for the date attests it; while the great painters were at their splendid work, architecture and sculpture, sealed with the sign of the Renaissance, were going together fast to indignity and death.

Ruskin, like Europe, had had his Primitive days, his trecento and his quattrocento, before the great hour when he had first seen Tintoretto in glory. The universal custom of change passed upon him too. Doubtless he never knew—for it is peculiar to genius not to know—how much his lot was the common lot, or how usual it is with men and women, as well as with mankind, to make the progress from a trecento to a cinquecento in due time. What befel him was, to him, unheard of, even though he was giving all his years to the study of a like movement in history, for he brought to every change his own incomparable freshness and the surprises of an authentic experience. He made his great discoveries with an enterprising spirit, and when he had taken his fill of his Renaissance he retraced his own eager and urgent footsteps, and sought the earlier of the Venetian painters (much earlier in spirit and a little earlier in time), and, far behind them, the mosaics of the Byzantine Greeks. It was not that he had not studied these in the past. The *Stones of Venice* proves with what admiration he had read that " Bible of Venice "—St. Mark's—on his first visit to the city of "tremulous streets"; but now, in a third phase of thought, he rediscovered all things, being greatly and freshly moved, and thinking, like the disciple in the *Imitation*, all he had done, until then, to be nothing.

The reading-lesson begins at the farthest side of St. Mark's from the sea, at a panel set horizontally—a sculpture of twelve sheep, a throne between six and six, a cross thereon, a circle, and within the circle " a little caprioling creature," the Lamb of God. This is true Greek work, the work of the teacher of the Venetian (as in another place we saw the Greek work that instructed the Pisan), and Ruskin has done no more important work in the history of art than this linking of the antique with the new. Is it perhaps Gibbon with his Fall of Rome that so darkens the air of some eight hundred years with a squalid dust-storm of demolition as to obscure our sight of the unquenched lights of the mind of man? Ruskin joins day to human day again, as the days of nature and the sun followed one another undimmed.

After the Byzantine panel, then, come the two sculptures that are the earliest real Venetian work found by Ruskin in his search amongst Venetian stones. These are no longer purely symbolical, no longer "a kind of stone-stitching or samplerwork, done with the innocence of a girl's heart," but ardently and laboriously sculptural; it is Venetian work of the early thirteenth century; it is traceable through sixteen hundred years to the sculptors of the Parthenon; and it is the first Venetian St. George.

This immortal symbol-story—story of Perseus before it was a story of a saint—Ruskin follows up to the heights of the great time of sculpture before the close of the fifteenth century. The house that bore this work of culmination has been destroyed since Ruskin led his traveller, with so much delight, to the study of its panel. Not so the Scuola of St. Theodore, carrying the sculpture of the mid-seventeenth century with its Raphaelesque attitude and its drapery "supremely, exquisitely bad"; nor that which bore the yet later decoration—the last of all done by Venice for herself and not for tourists: "the last imaginations of her polluted heart, before death."

The chapter called *Shadow on the Dial* shows the moral history of Venice to be but an "intense abstract" of the history of every nation in Europe.

And this history can be approached by a modern reader in the spirit "of our numerous cockney friends" who are sure that the fervour of Christian Venice "was merely such a cloak for her commercial appetite as modern church-going is for modern swindling"; or else in a spirit of respect for a faith that was but "an exquisite dream of mortal childhood" (and this Ruskin calls the "theory of the splendid mendacity of Heaven and majestic somnambulism of man"); or, thirdly, in the modest and rational spirit that confesses men to be in all ages deceived by their own guilty passions, but not altogether deprived of the perception of the rays from a Divinity in nature revealed to such as desire "to see the day of the Son of Man." In this spirit and with this desire does Ruskin begin again that history of Venetian art which he had told thirty years earlier; begins it "struck, almost into silence, by wonder at my own pert little Protestant mind." He leaves, he says, the blunder of his youth standing in the *Stones of Venice*, like Dr. Johnson repentant in Litchfield Market; but the blunder seems to be no more than a neglect of St. Mark himself and of his sepulture in the cathedral, with all that the possession of this national treasure—his body—imported to the Venetian heart. From the history briefly re-written I take this lovely phrase in description of the first, lowly, wooden Venice of the early centuries; Ruskin calls her "this amphibious city, this sea-dog of towns, looking with soft human eyes at you from the sand." When, in course of time, we come to the day of the press, Ruskin announces "printing, and the universal gabble of fools." We need to remember his former phrase of pity for peasants who have no books. There is a beautiful wayside page about the field that once spread wild flowers to the sea-winds before every coloured church in Venice—before St. Mark's itself. Ruskin himself had passed one of his happiest of all hours, looking out of a church upon a flowering field, in England. And here, also by the way, is a passage on the Gothic sense of life:

> "The Northern spiral is always elastic. . . . The Greek spiral drifted like that of a whirlpool or whirlwind. It is always an eddy or vortex—not a living rod like the point of a young fern."

The remainder of the historical essay is a reading of the mosaic and sculpture of St. Mark's—the codex of the religion of Venice.

The "first supplement" has for title "The Shrine of the Slaves" (the *Schiavoni*), and is a guide to the principal works of Carpaccio, whom Ruskin calls "the wonderfullest of Venetian harlequins." Foremost is Carpaccio's St. George—"you shall not find another piece quite the like of that little piece of work, for supreme, serene, unassuming, unfaltering sweetness of painter's perfect art," Ruskin says of the first of these; and further on he guides us through the series of the St. Jerome paintings. Ruskin studied Luini at Milan alternately with Carpaccio at Venice, for love of Luini was another sign of Ruskin's reaction against his former Renaissance; and the comparison of the two painters is one of the loveliest passages of Ruskin's work on the purer Italian art.

That part of the *Bible of Amiens* which places the book in this chapter of Guide-books is no more than the after-part; and the volume was originally intended to form one of the series bearing the general title *Our Fathers have told us*, planned to present "local divisions of Christian history," and to gather, "towards their close, into united illustration of the power of the Church in the Thirteenth Century." The whole project was never fulfilled.

The cathedral of Amiens stands in Ruskin's book as the representative work of the Franks in this north-western part of the country, and the centuries that prepared for the erection of such a sign as this—"the Parthenon of Gothic architecture"—are told in a few chapters, with the avowed intention of showing the student the virtues, and not the crimes, of the remote past. In as much as it was not the crimes of the sons of the Frank and Goth that raised this cluster of flowered sculpture, doubtless Ruskin works duly to the purpose of his book. He shows us the few centuries (three after the birth of Christ) during which the people of this region paid a belated homage to the gods of Rome, and the coming, preaching, and martyrdom of Saint Firmin in little Amiens, seated by her eleven streams, as, twelve hundred years later, the carvings of the cathedral were to record. A grave for the martyr in a garden, a little oratory over the grave—and here was erected the first bishopric on the soil of Gaul; and when the Franks themselves came from the north, here was their first capital. Two legends are told in this sketch of history—the story of St. Martin, and that of St. Genevieve: St. Martin, the Roman soldier, who in the thirty-first winter after the coming of St. Firmin, when men were dying of the frost, cut his cloak in two with his sword, to cover a beggar; St. Martin, who was afterwards Bishop of Tours, and "an influence of unmixed good to all mankind, then and afterwards," and who took his episcopal vestment from his shoulders at a church ceremony, as he had rent his cloak, for gift to a beggar. Ruskin teaches us of what small moment it is whether these things came to pass in fact, and of what great moment that they were told. There is also the hobnobbing of the same St. Martin, at table opposite to the Emperor of Germany, with the beggar behind his chair:

> "You are aware that in Royal feasts in those days persons of much inferior rank in society were allowed in the hall: got behind people's chairs, and saw and heard what was going on, while they unobtrusively picked up crumbs and licked trenchers."

The legend of St. Genevieve is of the wild fifth century:

> "Seven years old she was, when, on his way to England from Auxerre, Saint Germain passed a night in her village, and among the children who brought him on his way . . . noticed this one—wider-eyed in reverence than the rest; drew her to him, questioned her, and was sweetly answered that she

would fain be Christ's handmaid. And he hung round her neck a small copper coin, marked with a cross. . . . More than Nitocris was to Egypt, more than Semiramis to Nineveh, more than Zenobia to the city of palm-trees—this seven years old shepherd maiden became to Paris and her France."

The description of the cathedral is to be followed by a reading of the stone sculptures, on the spot. But I must extract this, on the wood-work:

"Aisles and porches, lancet windows and roses, you can see elsewhere as well as here—but such carpenter's work you cannot. It is late,—fully-developed flamboyant just past the fifteenth century—and has some Flemish stolidity mixed with the playing French fire of it. . . . Sweet and young-grained wood it is: oak *trained* and chosen for such work, sound now as four hundred years since. Under the carver's hand it seems to cut like clay, to fold like silk, to grow like living branches, to leap like living flame."

The apse at Amiens, we learn, is the first thing done perfectly in its manner by Northern Christendom; the best work here is the work of the only ten perfect years, so that from nave to transept—built no more than ten years later—there is a little change, "not towards decline, but a not quite necessary precision."

"Who built it, shall we ask? God and Man,—is the first and most true answer. The stars in their courses built it, and the Nations. Greek Athena labours here—and Roman Father Jove, and Guardian

Mars. The Gaul labours here, and the Frank; knightly Norman,—mighty Ostrogoth,—and wasted anchorite of Idumea."

In this place shall be extracted a page that the traveller should take with him to Lucca—the description of that tomb of Ilaria del Caretto, the work of Jacopo della Quercia, which, seen by Ruskin in his youth and often seen again, shared with a height of the Alps, a valley of the Jura, an allegory of Giotto, a myth of Pallas, the rule over Ruskin's life. The passage is in *The Three Colours of Pre-Raphaelitism*:

"This sculpture is central in every respect; being the last Florentine work in which the proper form of Etruscan tomb is preserved, and the first in which all right Christian sentiment respecting death is embodied. . . . This, as a central work, has all the peace of the Christian Eternity, but only in part its gladness. Young children wreath round the tomb a garland of abundant flowers, but she herself, Ilaria, yet sleeps; the time is not yet come for her to be awakened out of sleep. Her image is a simple portrait of her—how much less beautiful than she was in life we cannot know—but as beautiful as marble can be. And through and in the marble we may see that the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth: yet as visibly a sleep that shall know no ending until the last day break, and the last shadow flee away; until then, she shall not return. Her hands are laid on her breast—not praying—she has no need to pray now. She wears her dress of every day, clasped at her throat, girdled at her waist, the hem of it drooping over her feet. No disturbance of its folds by pain or sickness, no binding, no shrouding of her sweet form, in death more than in life. As a soft, low wave of summer sea, her breast rises; no more: the rippled gathering of its close mantle droops to her belt, then sweeps to her feet, straight as drifting snow. And at her feet her dog lies watching her; the mystery of his mortal life joined, by love, to her immortal one. Few know, and fewer love the tomb and its place—not shrine, for it stands bare by the cathedral wall. . . . But no goddess statue of the Greek cities, no nun's image among the cloisters of Apennine, no fancied light of angel in the homes of heaven, has more divine rank among the thoughts of men."

CHAPTER XXVI

"FORS CLAVIGERA" (1871–1884)

THIS collection of papers being in part biographical, I have placed it somewhat out of its chronological turn, so as immediately to precede *Præterita* in closing the volume.

The name is explained by Ruskin at the outset. Fors Clavigera is the fate or fortune that bears a club, a key, a nail, signifying the deed of Hercules, the patience of Ulysses, the law of Lycurgus.

Of the seven years' volumes of the first series I cannot hope to make even the all-imperfect indication (exposition it can hardly be called)—the little popular guide—that I have attempted in the case of the other works of capital importance. The running theme of this book is too various, too allusive; it is not a book as the others are books. Unity of purpose it has, but it has the form of letters—*Letters to the Workmen and Labourers of Great Britain*—written according to the suggestion of the changing day. The initial motive is the redress of social misery—*miseria* as the Italians call it *par excellence*—that is, the poverty of classes, the poverty of millions, indiscriminate poverty: not the misery which is either deserved or undeserved, or wherefrom this or that man can rise by using the shoulders of those who cannot, but the massive poverty, the collective.

"For my own part [says the first letter] I will put up with this state of things not an hour longer. I am not an unselfish person, nor an Evangelical one; I have no particular pleasure in doing good; neither do I dislike doing it so much as to expect to be rewarded for it in another world. But I simply cannot paint, nor read, nor look at minerals, nor do anything else that I like, . . . because of the misery that I know of, and see signs of where I know it not, which no imagination can interpret too bitterly."

The help Ruskin proposes is, to show the causes, to teach a remedy, meanwhile to set aside the greater part of his own wealth for the succour of misery in detail, and to set members of St. George's Guild over the acreages of the poverty of cities. Having found himself rich, Ruskin "piously and prudently began to grow poor again," for the sake of the poor, giving one-tenth of his fortune, for instance, for the buying of land for them. He began to be poor. It would be a mockery to say more of a man living, as he said, "between a Turkey carpet and a Titian," however laborious were his days. In many places he complains of the luxury of his boyhood, which made the practice of poverty more than he could attempt. He had always been generous; giving annuities with both hands —the case of Miss Siddal in her delicate health has been made public; but he reproached himself that he had not the courage to live in a garret or make shoes like Tolstoy (whom he had not read, but heard of with sympathetic envy); but, after the self-spoliation of his patrimony, he had a great income from his books. St. George's Guild, the members whereof gave also a tithe of their revenues, was to do the human work of keeping the garden and dressing it, fostering fish in the waters, and flocks and herds on the grass. John Ruskin with his own hand tried to tend a Surrey stream (at Carshalton) and tried to keep a little piece of pavement clean in a London back street, and his undergraduates mended the famous road near Oxford. The Guild was to succour childhood and educate it. Education was one of his chief of all projects. The John Ruskin school at Camberwell, and Whitelands College at Chelsea, amongst others, keep the memory of his generosity and his sympathy. As the Guild was also to see that the poor were not fined for their poverty, he himself set up a shop in Paddington Street, served by his own servants, to sell tea in small quantities without the usual disproportionate profit on the subdivision. But for lack of expenditure on glass, brass, signs, and general advertising, the people were slow to buy at his shop. He would not reconcile himself to the fact (made hideous by exaggeration in every street) that a thing must be made known in a stupid world. He had seen it written by "a first-rate man of business" that "a bad thing will pay, if you put it properly before the public." What are the final results of putting bad things "properly" before the public he perceived, although neither the first-rate man of business nor the public seemed to do so much. In regard to the spoliation of the poor and foolish by more direct means than the proportional increase of profit on small sales, or the profit generally made necessary by plate glass and gilt letters, John Bright had said, about that time, that false weights and measures were not so frequent, nor was adulteration, as some philanthropists thought, and that therefore legislation had better let the matter alone; moreover that "life would not be worth living if one's weights and measures were liable to inspection"; or so Ruskin reports that deprecation of "interference" which was the pestilence of home affairs in those now distant days. Ruskin thought so much inquisition ought to be tolerable. So does all England think to-day. He also thought that the poor ought not to be deprived of food for fear (on the part of tradesmen) that "prices would go down." He had seen fish sent back to the coast from a London market for this cause. So, too, one year when the sun had given a great harvest of plums, a London fruit-seller refused to sell plums, for he said, with emotion, it would be a pity to sell them for less than so much a pound. He had a real respect for the plums. Meanwhile the poor streets were full of children who could buy neither fish nor plums at the artificial prices. With these matters the farms of the Guild were to deal as well as they might. The rents of St. George's lands were to be lowered, not raised, in proportion to improvements made by the tenant, and were to be returned to the land entirely in the form of better culture —not necessarily returned to the piece of land that produced them, but applied there or elsewhere. The tenants of St. George would have no more right to ask what was done with their fair rents than the tenants of another landlord have to ask about his race-horses. The financial work of the Company was to be (largely stated) the endowment, instead of the robbery by National Debt, of children's children; and endowment, not taxation, of the poor. For the construction of the Society; for its system of museums; for its admirable plan of discouraging the "arts," and especially the art of fiction; for the laws of its public and commercial economy (entirely gathered from, and tested by, English, Florentine, and Venetian history, and obeyed, with no acknowledgment to Ruskin, by the practice of the magistrates of our own day); for the vast scheme and its details, in a word, the reader must consult those parts of the seven years' letters that deal with it. Of himself as Master Ruskin wrote:

> "What am I myself then, infirm and old, who take or claim leadership . . . ? God forbid that I should claim it; it is thrust and compelled upon me—utterly against my will, utterly to my distress, utterly, in many things, to my shame! . . . Such as I am, to my own amazement, I stand—so far as I can discern—alone in conviction, in hope, and in resolution, in the wilderness of this modern world. Bred in luxury, which I perceive to have been unjust to others, and destructive to myself; vacillating, foolish, and miserably failing in all my own conduct in life—and blown about hopelessly by storms of passion—I, a man clothed in soft raiment,—I, a reed shaken with the wind— !"

To this passion of grief how shall any one desire that consolation had been brought? Not for passion, but for the lack of it, he reminds us, are men condemned—"because they had no pity." To wish him less mercy, to wish, with the vain wish of retrospection, that Ruskin had found some solace in the midst of the martyrdom of his convictions, is forbidden us.

Let this be borne in mind by those who care anything for the attempt—the conception, the project, and the failure of the Company: it was not intended to be a curative measure; it was not to cure drunkenness or to give alms, but to change the motive and action of the responsible social world.

The knotty parts of Political Economy must remain knotty for ordinary minds. Ruskin thinks his way through them as though they were easy to him. In reading Mill, on the other hand, you find him making his way with difficulty. The mere reader may choose his teachers, but has the right to ask that they shall speak to him in pure and exact English. This Ruskin does and Mill does not. There is nothing left, worth saying, of some of Mill's famous definitions after Ruskin has translated them. Those who call Ruskin's system "sentimental" (intending to insult it) and think they have done enough, cannot have so much as set out upon the road of his argument. It is true that he here and there digresses, as, for instance, to tell us that ministers of religion had been so loud against almsgiving one winter that when he wanted to give a penny he first looked up and down the street to see if a clergyman were coming. But the mental work, when it is in progress, is close. His quarrel with the science of Political Economy, as it is taught by its popular professors, is that it is not scientific enough, as his quarrel with the science of some geologists and of some botanists is to the same purpose. Although Ruskin says nothing to show that he recognises the identity, he holds much in common with Mill, for example, the national loss that is the price of luxury; Ruskin, however, shows the mischief as well as the loss. But he is alone in stating England to be a poor nation. Beside Mill's cautious chapters on Loans Ruskin places this:

> "There is nothing really more monstrous in any recorded savagery . . . than that governments should be able to get money for any folly they choose to commit by selling to capitalists the right of taxing future generations to the end of time. All the cruellest wars inflicted, all the basest luxuries grasped by the idle classes, are thus paid for by the poor a hundred times over."

Let me also extract this, which the reader will replace in the chain of argument:

> "Those nations which exchange mechanical or artistic productions for food are servile, and necessarily in process of time will be ruined."

And in the pages on commercial economy, the reader will probably find that Fawcett merits Ruskin's contemptuous correction where he states the "interest of money" to consist of three parts, and the first to be "Reward for Abstinence." Abstinence, as Ruskin shows us, will not make the uneaten cake any the larger after it has lain by, postponed, for a year or ten.

It is less from the incompressible main argument than from the by-ways of the letters on Economy that the present pages shall be illustrated. For instance, Ruskin commends a communism in all things, even joys: "There is in this world infinitely more joy than pain to be shared, if you will only take your share"; such a partaking of joys not at first ours being the perfection of charity, and strangely enough, though a happy task, more difficult than many a sad one. This is from one of those digressions on education which grow more and more frequent in the volumes of *Fors:*

> "You little know . . . by what constancy of law the power of highest discipline and honour is vested by Nature in the two chivalries—of the Horse and the Wave."

Of his own early travels by carriage with his father in England he says that as soon as he could perceive any political truth at all, he perceived that it was probably much happier to live in a small house, "and have Warwick Castle to be astonished at, than to live in Warwick Castle and have nothing to be astonished at." This sums up, to one who will think of it, much of the teaching of Ruskin on national economy:

> "That rain and frost of heaven; and the earth which they loose and bind; these, and the labour of your hands to divide them, and subdue, are your wealth forever. . . . You can diminish it, but cannot increase; that your barns should be filled with plenty—your presses burst with new wine—is your blessing; and every year—when it is full—it must be new; and, every year, no more. This money, which you

think so multipliable, is only to be increased in the hands of some, by the loss of others. The sum of it, in the end, represents, and can represent, only what is in the barn and winepress."

Not all the letters are full of this matter. Some of them are written from Pisa, Rome, Lucca, or Verona; some are historical studies; one has a quiet and lovely page on the cultivated lands under Carrara.

" On each side of the great plain is a wilderness of hills, veiled at their feet with a grey cloud of olive-woods; above, sweet with glades of chestnut; peaks of more distant blue, still, to-day, embroidered with snow, are rather to be thought of as vast precious stones than mountains, for all the state of the world's palaces has been hewn out of their marble."

From Verona Ruskin writes of the breaking of a thunder-shower over the city, at the outer gates of the Alpine valleys, and the slipping into the Lombard rivers of a million of sudden streams. Why did not the Italians gather the water for their towns? Some men were standing idle in the *piazze* (machines doing such work as there was in their stead), others were employed to " dash to pieces " the Gothic of Tuscany and Lombardy, and others to stick bills bearing " Rome or death " upon the ancient walls of Venice, but there was no time nor money for saving the subalpine valleys from flood. At the same time Ruskin gives a simple lesson to engineers on the making of reservoirs, and to writers (Charles Reade is evidently aimed at) on the description of them. They should be wide, not deep ; the gate of a dry dock can keep out the Atlantic, to the necessary depth of feet and inches ; " the depth giving the pressure, not the superficies." Thence he passes, like Napoleon after making roads, but to better purpose, to the education of girls ; and describes with an exquisiteness that at once quickens and guards the sweet and humorous and modest phrases, Carpaccio's painting of the young princess. It is hard upon two American girls, whom Ruskin saw travelling from Venice to Verona with the blinds of the railway carriage closed, to rebuke them by the contrast of their mind and manners with St. Ursula's. Incidentally Ruskin quotes much from Marmontel, a writer of the late eighteenth century to whom he claims a kind of resemblance of sympathy, but whom the reader is free to think he honours over much.

The twenty-fourth letter, which is the first dated from Corpus Christi College, is the last which begins " My Friends " : not one of the workmen he addressed had sent him a friendly word in answer. " Nor shall I sign myself ' faithfully yours ' any more ; being very far from faithfully my own, and having found most other people anything but faithfully mine." To the other money-troubles expressed in this and other works of about this time begin to be added those doubts as to the lawfulness of taking interest which Ruskin discusses with a correspondent. The coin itself is the subject of one letter, which has a fine lesson on the florin, and a gay one on the sovereign (the sovereign of 1872, and what have we not come to since then ?) :

> "As a design—how brightly comic it is! The horse looking abstractedly into the air, instead of where precisely it *would* have looked, at the beast between its legs: St. George, with nothing but his helmet on (being the last piece of armour he is likely to want), putting his naked feet, at least his feet showing their toes through the buskins, well forward, that the dragon may with the greatest convenience get a bite at them; and about to deliver a mortal blow at him with a sword which cannot reach him by a couple of yards,—or, I think, in George III.'s piece, with a field-marshal's truncheon. Victor Carpaccio had other opinions on the likelihood of matters in this battle. His St. George exactly reverses the practice of ours. He rides armed, from shoulder to heel, in proof—but without his helmet. For the real difficulty in dragon-fights . . . is not so much to kill your dragon as to *see* him; at least to see him in time, it being too probable that he will see you first. Carpaccio's St. George will have his eyes about him, and his head free to turn freely. . . . He meets his dragon at the gallop, catches him in the mouth with his lance. . . . But Victor Carpaccio had seen knights tilting; and poor Pistrucci . . . had only seen them presenting addresses as my Lord Mayor, and killing turtle instead of dragons."

What a perceptive and penetrative imagination as to any encounter with dragons that may befall—not Carpaccio's imagination only, but Ruskin's! How much dramatic possession of the matter! And what sense of dragons! Emerson had been the only man who believed Ruskin's story of Turner—that he had darkened his own picture lest it should take the light out of Lawrence's; yet Emerson joined those who rejoice in discrediting, when he took some less than noble pleasure in exposing St. George as a fraudulent bacon-factor who was lynched, not martyred, and deserved it. Strange subject for triumph or scorn! If St. George had been honoured for his fraud, like an American millionaire, the laugh, such as it is, might have been against his votaries; but seeing that he was honoured for his honour (whether by error or not) how thin and unintelligent is the malice of the jest! Needless to say, however, the St. George believed to have been martyred under Diocletian was not the George of the bacon contract, later a heretic bishop, and lynched. The symbol of the dragon did not for some ages enter into the story of the canonised St. George. On this subject it is that Ruskin speaks his only reverent word (or nearly the only one) of a German author, calling Goethe "the wise German."

In the prelude to the study of Scott which fills some part of *Fors*, is this passage on some of the results of the work of "tale-tellers," those who had dynasties:

> "Miss Edgeworth made her morality so impertinent that, since her time, it has only been with fear and trembling that any good novelist has ventured to show the slightest bias in favour of the ten commandments. Scott made his romance so ridiculous that since his day one can't help fancying helmets were always paste-board, and horses were always hobby. Dickens made everybody laugh or cry, so that they could not go about their business till they had got their faces in wrinkles; and Thackeray settled like a meat-fly on whatever one had got for dinner, and made one sick of it."

It is from *Fors Clavigera* that we first learn the story of John Ruskin's childhood, severely governed in the strange sense of the "Evangelical" sect of that time—that children should be deprived by compulsion of what their elders amply permitted themselves, should see self-indulgence at table in those they were taught to respect, but should be allowed no dainties for themselves. A fasting father and mother setting the example one can understand, but not this mute promise of a groaning board in the future, when father and mother should be dead. Ruskin acquiesces, more or less, in the discipline. It was Dickens who made things more equitable; but the equity was established in indulgence, not in fasting. Precious are the fragments of biography as the letters go on, and most mournful, as: "My father and mother and nurse are dead, and the woman I hoped would have been my wife is dying." We find him remembering amid the golden-lighted whitewash of a poor room at Assisi (he not only studied Giotto and the *poverello* St. Francis there, but maintained a Friar) the poor room of his aunt at Croydon; at Notre Dame gleaning the remnants of old work among the fine fresh restorations, having it cast, and drawing it; on the Pincio with his arm about the neck of a *frate* who wished to kiss his hand. We find him (by a memory of what had happened in 1858) at Turin, overwhelmed by a sense of the "God-given power" of Veronese, and listening in a Waldensian chapel to "a little squeaking idiot," with a congregation of "seventeen old women and three louts." Their preacher told them they were the only "people of God" in Turin. It had been the turning point of twenty years of thought to John Ruskin, and more than twenty years "in much darkness and sorrow" followed it, but during this sermon he had renounced the sect of his youth.

Ruskin's diction is noble in vigour and high in vitality in this work of impassioned intellect, *Fors Clavigera*. Not here does he force with difficulty the tired and inelastic common speech to explain his untired mind, as in some pages of *Modern Painters;* not here are perorations of eloquence over-rich; not here constructions after Hooker, nor signs of Gibbon. All the diction is fused in the fiery life, and the lesser beauties of eloquence are far transcended. During the publication of these letters the world told him, now that he could express himself but could not think, and now that he was effeminate. But he was giving to that world the words of a martyr of thought, and the martyr was a man.

CHAPTER XXVII

"PRÆTERITA" (1885-1889)

The limits of a brief expository essay debar me from giving so much as an outline of small out-lying books, early pamphlets and articles, and later lectures, public letters, and such minor incidental work as the notes on the Royal Academy of six years; the notes on the Turner drawings; the ten conversation-lectures to little school-girls on the elements of crystallisation, published under the title *Ethics of the Dust* (1866); *The Laws of Fésole* (1877-1878); *The Pleasures of England* (1885), which were the last of the Slade lectures; *Hortus Inclusus* (1874-1887)—the letters to Miss Beever and her sister, who collected the volume *Frondes Agrestes* from *Modern Painters;* the studies of the architecture of the Cistercian Order; and the re-published volume of early poetry. *Arrows of the Chace* and *On the Old Road* contain respectively the public letters and the magazine papers, collected. There remains, therefore, only the book of autobiography, the last page whereof was the last written by Ruskin for the world.

The friendship with Turner in Ruskin's youth is presented to us as a relation warm and equal in the elder generation; but as to himself Ruskin records little but slight discouragement from the painter he loved. Turner seems to have been principally anxious that the young author should give his parents no anxiety on his travels: "They will be in such a fidge about you," we find Turner saying dubiously on his own doorstep when Ruskin was to travel alone. "It used to be, to my father, 'yours most truly,' and to me 'yours truly.'" Ruskin's first defence of the old man (it was against a criticism in *Blackwood's Magazine*, in 1836, and Ruskin was seventeen) is acknowledged with thanks but without praise, and Turner adds, "I never move in these matters." We read of Ruskin's own study of drawing. He learnt, whilst yet in his teens, of Copley Fielding,

> "To wash colour smoothly in successive tints, to shade cobalt through pink madder into yellow ochre for skies, to use a broken scraggy touch for the tops of mountains, to represent calm lakes by broad strips of shade with lines of light between them, . . . to produce dark clouds and rain with twelve or twenty successive washes, and to crumble burnt umber with a dry brush for foliage and foreground."

But this was a pupil who was discovering a manner of measuring the degrees of blue in the sky, and who was acquiring the only true temper of solitude—unlike, he found later, to Carlyle's:

> "That the rest of the world was waste to him unless he had admirers in it, is a sorry state of sentiment enough. . . . My entire delight was in observing without being myself noticed. . . . I was absolutely interested in men and their ways, as I was interested in marmots and chamois, in tomtits and trout. If only they would stay still and let me look at them, and not get into their holes and up their heights."

The most moving passage in the first volume shows the opening to Ruskin of the " Gates of the Hills," on his " impassioned petition " to his parents that the way of travel might, for the first time, lie towards the Alps —

> " Gates of the Hills ; opening for me to a new life— to cease no more, except at the Gates of the Hills whence one returns not."

It is from the slight record of the books taken into the travelling-carriage that I quote this magnificent image of the great balance of Johnson's style :

> " I valued his sentences not primarily because they were symmetrical, but because they were just, and clear ; . . . it is a method of judgment rarely used by the average public, who . . . are as ready with their applause for a sentence of Macaulay's, which may have no more sense in it than a blot pinched between doubled paper, as to reject one of Johnson's, . . . *though its symmetry be as of thunder answering from two horizons.*"

We find Ruskin, " of age," making drawings rather in imitation of Turner, and " out of his own head," than in the copying of Copley Fielding ; drawings with rocks, castles, and balustrades. He was aware, throughout his life, of his lack of inventive imagination : " I can no more write a story than compose a picture," he says in reference to his story for children, *The King of the Golden River.* It was a bit of ivy round a thorn stem that first drew his eyes to the life of things, and next he studied an aspen-tree against the sky on a road through Fontainebleau; in a later page he avows that his drawings of Venetian stones were "living and like." And with these traces of travel are the records of Beauvais, Bourges, Chartres, Rouen, a magnificent chapter on Geneva and the Rhone, and on his discovery of the Campo Santo at Pisa, and of Lucca, to be beloved for the rest of life. Here was the tomb of Ilaria del Caretto, and

> "Here in Lucca I found myself suddenly in the presence of twelfth century buildings, originally set in such balance of masonry that they could all stand without mortar; and in material so incorruptible, that after six hundred years of sunshine and rain, a lancet could not now be put between their joints."

In the Pisan cemetery Ruskin drew, seated on a scaffold level with the frescoes:

> "I, . . . being by this time practiced in delicate curves, by having drawn trees and grass rightly, got far better results than I had hoped, and had an extremely happy fortnight of it. For as the triumph of Death was no new thought to me, the life of hermits was no temptation."

At Florence he made friends with the Friars at Fiesole (he insists upon "Fésole," with an acute accent that has no existence in the Italian language), for the Friars had not yet been expelled by law, and there remained some living ancient stones in Italy, later destroyed, or restored, or dead, dark, and dull within museums. His principal work was at Santa Maria Novella and San Marco, and his master, Fra

Angelico—"Lippi and Botticelli being still far beyond me."

Why did Ruskin never go to Spain? He owns that he admires in himself the "simplicity of affection" that kept him in love year by year with Calais sands, and the Narcissus meadows of Vevay, and the tomb at Lucca, whereas he heard even more than the customary praises (through his father's wine-making relations) of the sierras and of the architecture. It seems that he decided, on the evidence of "the absolutely careful and faithful work of David Roberts," that Spanish and Arab buildings were merely luxurious in ornament, and inconstructive in character. He went no further; and had, besides, more than enough on the ways of study that knew his feet. It is in allusion to Spain, however, that in this second volume of *Præterita* we find the first signs of his vigilance in other things than the leaves of nature or the arts of man. It is in the chapter called "The Feasts of the Vandals," which names the guests received in the Ruskins' house. Amongst then were the daughters of the wine-selling partner, M. Domecq, in those days married.

> "Elise, Comtesse des Roys, and Caroline, Princesse Bethune, came with their husbands . . . partly to see London, partly to discuss with my father his management of the English market: and the way in which these lords, virtually, of lands both in France and Spain, though men of sense and honour; and their wives, though women of gentle and amiable disposition, . . . spoke of their Spanish labourers and French tenantry, with no idea whatever respect-

ing them but that, except as producers by their labour of money to be spent in Paris, they were cumberers of the ground, gave me the first clue to the real sources of wrong in the social laws of modern Europe. . . . It was already beginning to be, if not a question, at least a marvel with me, that these graceful and gay Andalusians, who played guitars, danced boleros, and fought bulls, should virtually get no good of their beautiful country but the bunch of grapes or stalk of garlic they frugally dined on; that its precious wine was not for them, still less the money it was sold for; but the one came to crown our Vandalic feasts, and the other furnished our . . . walls with pictures, our . . . gardens with milk and honey, and five noble houses in Paris with the means of beautiful dominance in its Elysian fields."

Ruskin's friendship with Dr. John Brown, a friend of his father's race and native town, and therefore, he says, best of friends for him, is conspicuous in the second volume. Of the long friendship with Carlyle there is little trace, and that little a report not of Ruskin's but of Carlyle's youth. Margaret was the daughter of the schoolmaster who gave to Carlyle his first valid lessons in Latin. She lived to be twenty-seven. Carlyle told Ruskin, "The last time that I wept aloud in the world, I think was at her death."

During the journeys told in the earlier pages of this volume, Ruskin was meditating the second volume of *Modern Painters*. Sydney Smith was amongst the most eagerly expectant. Ruskin says:

"All the main principles of metaphysics asserted in the opening of *Modern Painters* had been, with conclusive decision and simplicity, laid down by Sydney himself in the lectures he gave on Moral Philosophy at the Royal Institution in the years 1804–5–6, of which he had never himself recognised the importance."

The reader may remember, I will add, that Sydney Smith was slightly contemned as a sentimentalist for his advocacy of the cause of "climbing boys." At any rate, those readers who care for children and for the English language may have in their minds the phrases whereby, in the course of his plea for legislation in that matter, he rebuked the world of his day for its profligate indifference.

To the signature "Kataphusin," used in the earliest of Ruskin's essays, had followed that of "A Graduate of Oxford," and the work so signed was looked for, as Ruskin himself says, "by more people than my father and mother"; but Sydney Smith was the earliest admirer in high places. Ruskin's fame was already old, and he still young, when on the Lake of Geneva he met his American reader, Charles Eliot Norton—"my second friend after Dr. John Brown: . . . my first real tutor." This friend was of his own age, but a greater reader, Ruskin found, and a better scholar. In 1888, writing *Præterita* at Sallenches, he says in regard to this friendship:

> "I can see them at this moment, those mountain meadows, if I rise from my writing-table . . .; yes, and there is the very path we climbed together, apparently unchanged. But on what seemed then the everlasting hills, beyond which the dawn rose

cloudless, and on the heaven in which it rose, and on all that we that day knew, of human mind and virtue —how great the change, and sorrowful, I cannot measure."

There is a great deal, in these last of all volumes, about preachers to whose sermons Ruskin listened in his youth, and about monks and friars whom he then visited abroad. And in this connexion I must extract a charming passage from one of the letters, of thirty years later, to Miss Beever, from Assisi:

"The sacristan gives me my coffee for lunch in his own little cell, looking out on the olive woods; . . . and then perhaps we go into the sacristy and have a reverent little poke-out of relics. . . . Things that are only shown twice in the year or so, with fumigation! all the congregation on their knees —and the sacristan and I having a great heap of them on the table at once, like a dinner-service!"

But he lived to see another kind of Italy. He hoped never again to hear the summer evening noises of an Italian town as they appalled his indignant ears in one of his last Italian summers—a summer of the long foretold and long desired days of political unity. Tearings to pieces and restorations he was compelled to see under the various political conditions of half a century. More inevitable things than these, in all countries, displeased him; howbeit he resigned himself, many years after the invention of railways, to main lines. It was the by-ways of the rail that he thought unnecessary and unnecessarily destructive:

> " There was a rocky valley between Buxton and Bakewell, divine as the vale of Tempe ; you might have seen the gods there morning and evening—Apollo and all the sweet Muses of the Light. You enterprised a railroad, . . . you blasted its rocks away, . . . and now every fool in Buxton can be at Bakewell in half an hour, and every fool in Bakewell at Buxton."

The last phrase of the last volume (1889) closes a remembrance of Fonte Branda, the waters Dante remembered in the streamless place. With Charles Norton Ruskin had drunk of those sweet waters under the arches that hooded the head of Dante ; and, as it chances, these last of all words composed by Ruskin end, in Dante's way, with " the stars." " Mixed with the lightning," he says of the fireflies of one of those Italian summer nights, " and more intense than the stars." After this he wrote no more. But the last extract here shall be from the notes on a Turner exhibition in 1878, written just before the gravest illness of his life :

> " Oh that someone had told me in my youth, when all my heart seemed to be set on these colours and clouds that appear for a little while and then vanish away, how little my love of them would serve me when the silence of lawn and wood in the dews of morning should be completed ; and all my thoughts should be of those whom, by neither, I was to meet more ! "

CHRONOLOGY

The kindness of Mr. Ruskin's friend and mine, Mr. S. C. Cockerell, gives me the advantage of borrowing, with some slight abbreviations, his excellent biographical Chronology.

1819.—Feb. 8. John Ruskin born; 54 Hunter Street, Brunswick Square.

1822.—To Perth. Portrait by Northcote.

1823.—Summer tour in S. W. of England. Removed to 28 Herne Hill.

1824.—To the Lakes, Keswick, Perth.

1825.—To Paris, Brussels, Waterloo.

1826.—Wrote first poem "The Needless Alarm." Summer tour to the Lakes and Perth. Began Latin.

1827.—Summer at Perth.

1828.—Summer in West of England. His cousin Mary Richardson adopted by his parents.

1829.—Summer in Kent.

1830.—Tour to the Lakes. Began Greek. Copied Cruikshank.

1831.—First drawing lessons from Runciman. Summer tour in Wales. Began mathematics.

1832.—Summer tour in Kent.

1833.—First Turner study in Rodgers' *Italy*. Tour to the Rhine and Switzerland. Copied Rembrandt. Went to day-school.

1834.—First study of Alpine geology. First published writings. Summer tour in West of England.

1835.—Tour to Switzerland and Italy. First published poems.

1836.—Visit of the Domecqs. Drawing-lessons from Copley Fielding. Wrote *Defence of Turner*. Tour to the South Coast after matriculating at Christ Church.

1837.—Went into residence at Oxford. Summer tour to the Lakes and Yorkshire. Began *Poetry of Architecture*, and *The Convergence of Perpendiculars*.

1838.—Wrote essay, *Comparative Advantages of Music and Painting*. Tour to the Lakes.

1839.—Recited Newdigate prize poem at Commemoration. Tour to Cheddar, Devon, and Cornwall. Read with Osborne Gordon.

1840.—Threatened with consumption. By Loire and Riviera to Rome.

1841.—At Naples, Bologna, Venice, Basle. Under treatment at Leamington. Drawing-lessons from Harding.

1842.—Passed final examination, and took B.A. degree. Saw Turner's Swiss sketches. Study of ivy from nature. Tour to France and Switzerland. Wrote *Modern Painters*, vol. i.

1843.—Removed from Herne Hill to Denmark Hill. Took M.A. degree.

1844.—Tour in Switzerland. Studied Old Masters at the Louvre.

1845.—First tour alone. To Pisa. Study of Christian art at Lucca and Florence. To Verona. Study of Tintoretto at Venice. Wrote *Modern Painters*, vol. ii.

1846.—Through France and the Jura to Geneva, Mont Cenis, and Italy.

1847.—Tour in Scotland.

1848.—Married at Perth. Attempted pilgrimage to English cathedrals. To Amiens, Paris, and Normandy. *Seven Lamps*, at 31 Park Street.

1849.—Tour through Switzerland. Winter at Venice.

1850.—Studied architecture and missals at Venice. *Stones of Venice*, vol. i., at Park Street.

1851.—*Notes on Sheepfolds*. Acquaintance with Carlyle and Maurice. Defence of the Pre-Raphaelites. Tour through France and Switzerland. Winter and following spring at Venice. (Dec. 19. Turner died.)

1852.—*Stones of Venice*, vols. ii. and iii.

1853.—With Dr. Acland and Millais at Glenfinlas. Lectures, *Architecture and Painting*, at Edinburgh.

1854.—With parents in Switzerland. Drawing. Working Men's College inaugurated. Lectures to decorative workmen.

1855.—*Academy Notes* begun. Studied shipping at Deal. *Modern Painters*, vols. iii. and iv.

1856.—Address to workmen of the Oxford Museum. Tour in Switzerland. *Elements of Drawing.*

1857.—Lecture to Archit. Assoc., *Imagination in Architecture.* Address to St. Martin's School of Art. Lecture, *Political Economy of Art*, at Manchester. Address to Working Men's College. Tour in Scotland. Arranged Turner drawings at National Gallery.

1858.—Lecture, *Conventional Art*, S. Kensington. Lecture, *Work of Iron*, Tunbridge Wells. Official Report on Turner bequest. Address, *Study of Art*, St. Martin's School. Tour alone in Switzerland and Italy, studying Veronese at Turin. Inaugural address to Cambridge School of Art.

1859.—Lecture, *Unity of Art*, Royal Institution. Lecture, *Modern Manufacture and Design*, Bradford. Address, *Switzerland*, Working Men's College. Last tour with parents, in Germany.

1860.—Address, *Religious Art*, Working Men's College. *Modern Painters*, vol. v. *Unto this Last*, at Chamouni.

1861.—Gave Turner drawings to Oxford and to Cambridge. Addresses, *St. George's Mission*, Denmark Hill; *Three Twigs*, Royal Institution; *Illuminated Missals*, Burlington House. Tour in Savoy. *Munera Pulveris.*

1862.—Studied Luini at Milan.

1863.—Studied Limestone Alps. Lecture, *Stratified Alps*, Royal Institution.

1864.—Lecture at Working Men's College. His father died. Lecture, *Traffic*, Bradford. Lectures, *King's Treasuries* and *Queen's Gardens*, and address at Grammar School, Manchester.

1865.—Lecture, *Work and Play*, Camberwell. Addresses at Working Men's College. Address to R.I.B.A., *Study of Architecture.* Lecture, *War*, Woolwich Royal Military College.

1866.—With friends in Switzerland. Study of geology and botany. Spoke at meeting of the Eyre Defence Committee.

1867.—*Time and Tide.* Rede Lecture. Lecture, *Modern Art*, Royal Institution.

1868.—Lecture, *Mystery of Life*, Dublin. Address, *Three-legged Stool of Art*, Jermyn Street. Tour in Belgium and France with Professor Norton and others.

1869.—Lecture, *Flamboyant Architecture of the Somme*, Royal Institution. Lecture, *Greek Myths of Cloud and Storm*, University College. Lecture, *Hercules of Camarina*, South Lambeth School of Art. To France, Switzerland, Verona, and Venice. Elected Slade Professor. Lecture, *Future of England*, Woolwich.

1870.—Lecture, *Verona and its Rivers*, Royal Institution. First and Second Slade courses at Oxford. To Switzerland and Italy. Study of coins at the British Museum. Lecture, *Story of Arachne*, Woolwich.

1871.—*Fors Clavigera*, No. 1. Slade course on landscape. Dangerous illness at Matlock. Tour to Lakes and Scotland. Endowment of Mastership of Drawing, at Oxford. Elected Lord Rector of St. Andrew's University. His mother died.

1872.—Lecture, *The Bird of Calm*, Woolwich. Slade courses, *Eagle's Nest* and *Ariadne Florentina.* In residence at Corpus Christi College. In Italy. First residence at Brantwood.

1873.—Re-elected Slade Professor. Paper, *Nature and Authority of Miracle*, Grosvenor Hotel. Lectures, *Robin*, *Swallow*, and *Chough*, Oxford and Eton. Slade course, *Val d'Arno.*

1874.—To Rome and Sicily, studied Giotto at Assisi. Slade course, *Alps and Jura*, and *Schools of Florentine Art.* Lecture, *Botticelli*, at Eton.

1875.—Lecture, *Glacial Action*, Royal Institution. Slade course, *Sir Joshua Reynolds.* Lecture, *Spanish Chapel*, Eton.

1876.—Lectures, *Precious Stones*, Christ's Hospital; *Minerals*, Woolwich. Posting tours in England. To Switzerland.

1877.—Studied Carpaccio at Venice. Speech to Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Herne Hill. Lecture, *Yewdale and its Streamlets*, Kendal. Slade course, *Readings in Modern Painters.* Lecture, *Streams of Westmoreland*, Eton.

1878.—At Windsor Castle; at Hawarden. Turner exhibition in Bond Street. Illness at Brantwood. Whistler *versus* Ruskin trial.

1879.—Received Prince Leopold at St. George's Museum, Sheffield.

1880.—Lectures, *Snakes*, London Institution; *Amiens*, Eton. To Abbeville, Amiens, Beauvais, Chartres, Rouen.

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1882.—Copied in National Gallery. In France and Italy. Met Miss Alexander at Florence. Lecture, *Cistercian Architecture*, London Institute.

1883.—Slade course, *Art of England.* Lecture, *Francesca Alexander and Kate Greenaway*, Kensington. Tour to Scotland. Lecture, *Sir Herbert Edwards*, Coniston.

1884.—Lecture, *The Storm Cloud*, London Institution. Lecture to Academy Girls. Slade course, *The Pleasures of England.*

1885.—Address to Society of Friends of Living Creatures, Bedford Park.

1886.—*Præterita.*

1887.—A posting journey in England.

1888.—To Beauvais, the Jura, Venice, Berne. Last No. of *Præterita.*

1900.—January 20. Death at Brantwood, Coniston.

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